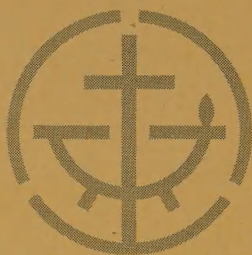


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ANCIENT RELIGIONS

BY

REV. J. N. FRADENBURGH, Ph.D., D.D.

President of the North Dakota University.



WINONA PUBLISHING CO.

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To my Sons,

ADELBERT GRANT AND ERNEST MINOR,

IN

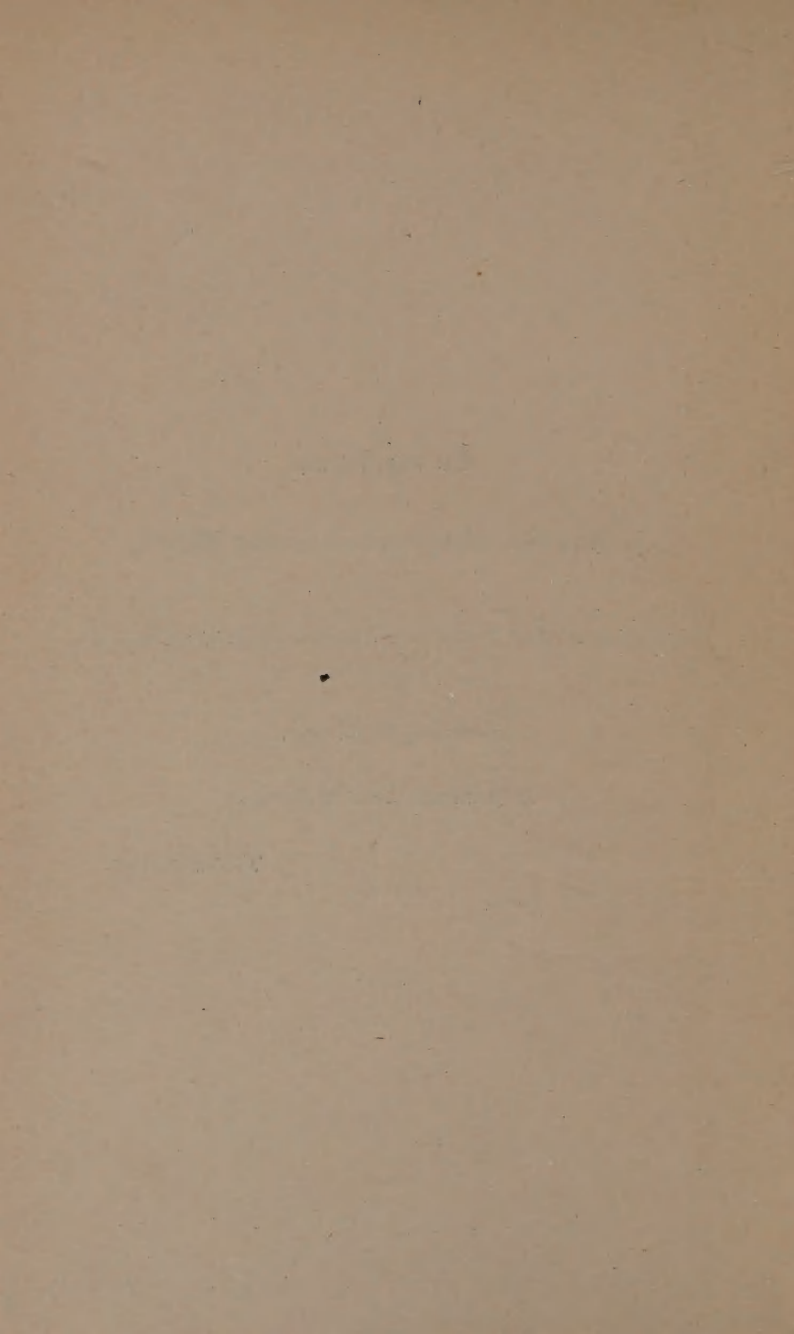
Recognition of their Purest Filial Devotion, Stainless Characters,

AND

Ripening Scholarship,

I Dedicate this Volume.

THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

THE present work is a concluding volume of a series in which are treated in a popular way, and yet with a fair degree of thoroughness, the great religions of the world, both living and extinct. "Living Religions" possesses peculiar interest in that it discusses the faiths of the present heathen world in fields now mapped out and occupied for Christian missionary conquest. "Fire from Strange Altars" is not less important in that it attempts to place in systematic array many of the ascertained facts concerning the archaic literatures and old cults of Israel's neighbors, from the earliest period which history has reached to that when these mighty empires, which shook the world while it was yet but young, dropped in pieces with the advent of more advanced political and religious ideas, more efficient engines of war, and wiser military organizations and plans for defense or conquest. The present volume, it is believed, will command an equally generous welcome, both because of its connection with the classic nations, and much

more because it treats of the religions of our own fathers before the light of Christianity shot its mild and beneficent rays into the world's first gloom.

The student of the Greek and Latin classics has had his attention too frequently confined to dry details concerning the genealogies of the gods or the myths which relate their adventures and exploits—presenting the moral character of the divinities in a light in which little, to say the least, can be found for unqualified commendation; while the Germanic and Celtic nations have failed to receive any adequate hearing. While the author in this work does not neglect mythology, he endeavors to awaken a more lively interest in the religions of the peoples with whom he has to do. Such a work can not but give new interest to the studies of the classic student, while the general reader will be instructed and edified in its perusal. The Christian scholar also will not fail to appreciate its value. It will increase his reverence for his fathers, who walked by this uncertain but only light, while he will more and more rejoice that all other religious lights of the world have been eclipsed by the true and glorious light of the Sun of Righteousness.

JULY, 1891.

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I.

The Religion of Greece.

I.

GREAT ZEUS.

THE Pelasgians worshiped the Supreme God, nameless, and without temple or image, on high mountain-tops, the natural altars erected and consecrated by the power and presence of God. Zeus may have meant at one time merely the heavens, the luminiferous abode of the invisible God. In the midst of the idolatrous and polytheistic worship of later times, the God not made with hands or apprehended by the physical senses, still dwelt on the tops of the sacred mountains, in the brightness of his glory, formless and unapproachable. There was a pious dread of naming or representing the Divine Being; hence there were altars to the Unknown, the Great, the Pure, and the Merciful. This early Pelasgian god demanded the sacrifice of human victims, and the Greek religion was not emancipated from these bloody rites till after the lapse of many centuries.

Greek literature bears traces of a pre-classical stage in theology. The three gods who shared among themselves the dominion of the world—the earth, the sea, and the realm of the shades—may have been originally the same god.

Persephone, the wife of Hades, according to an Orphic myth, was united with Father Zeus in the form of a snake. In the Pontic cult there is little or no distinction between the Chthonian Zeus and the supreme Zeus. Plato also makes Pluto, the god of wealth, closely resemble Zeus abounding in riches. The god is still more closely connected with the sea. He gives the fair winds, so welcome to mariners, and his temples are frequently built on headlands overlooking the sea. He also protects the landings of voyagers. Poseidon occasionally bears the designation of Zeus Enalios, or "Zeus of the Sea." The Pelasgic Zeus was differentiated, and there resulted three brothers—Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades.

Some of his sons may also have been developed out of his character. He bore epithets by which he was distinguished as the god of war—the strong one, the helper in the conflict, and the giver of triumph. The Zeus of the Carians was represented equipped with a battle-ax, and clad in the complete armor of a soldier. Ares, the god of war, was a later development.

This Zeus became the chief of the Olympic gods, the father of gods, and the god of gods.

Paul quotes from a Greek poet, "We are his offspring." (Acts xvii, 28.) This clause is from

a hymn of Cleanthes, a Stoic philosopher, who was born at Assos in the Troad, about B. C. 264. This may well be characterized as one of the purest conceptions of God to be found in all heathendom. It does not descend to the low pantheism which, more than anything else, disfigures the Stoic system. We present a translation of the hymn :

“O thou, who, under several names, art adored, but whose power is entire and infinite! O Zeus, first of immortals, sovereign of nature, governor of all, and supreme legislator of all things, accept my suppliant prayer; for to man is given the right to invoke thee! Whatever lives and moves on this earth drew its being from thee; we are a faint similitude of thy divinity.

“I will address, then, my prayers to thee, and never will I cease to praise thy wondrous power. That universe, suspended over our heads, and which seems to roll around the earth, obeys thee; it moves along, and silently submits to thy mandate. The thunder, minister of thy laws, rests under thy invincible hands; flaming, gifted with an immortal life, it strikes, and all nature is terrified. Thou directest the universal spirit which animates all things, and lives in all beings.

“Such, O almighty king, is thy unbounded sway! In heaven, on earth, or in the floods below, there is nought performed or produced without thee, except the evil which springs from the heart of the wicked. By thee, confusion is changed into order; by thee, the warring elements are united. By a happy agreement, thou so blindest good with evil as to produce a general and eternal harmony of the world. Wretched being, who seeks after good, and yet perceives not the universal law which points out the way to render him at once good and happy. He abandons the pursuit of virtue and justice, and roves where each passion moves him. Sordid wealth, fame, and sensual pleasures become, by turns, the objects of his pursuit.

“O God, from whom all gifts descend, who sittest in thick darkness, thunder-ruling Lord, dispel this ignorance from the mind of man; deign to enlighten his soul; draw it to that eternal reason which serves as thy guide and support in the government of the world; so that, honored with a portion of this light, we may, in our turn, be able to honor thee, by celebrating thy great works unceasingly in a hymn! This is the proper duty of man. For, surely, nothing can be more delightful to the inhabitants of the

earth or the skies, than to celebrate that divine reason which presides over nature.”*

Aratus, another Greek poet, sings in similar strains, assigning to Zeus that providential care which watches over all the creatures of God, and calling upon all men to worship him who is their great and faithful friend.

There is also an Orphic hymn of great beauty, in which Zeus is praised in loftiest terms. It is said to have been quoted by Plato, and, if so, must be ancient. The pantheistic flavor of the hymn may mar, but can not conceal, its real beauty.†

When we are studying the lives of the philosophers, we are all the while conscious that we are learning but little concerning the religion of the common people. We may, however, well believe that some of the simple pious among the people, so far as the subject came within the range of their intellectual and spiritual vision, recognized God in his true character, by whatever name he might be called, and extended to him proper reverence and worship. The comic writers and satirists must be read, yet with discrimination. Glimpses of the worship of the lower classes are afforded in incidental and some-

* Cory, *Ancient Fragments*, pp. 192, 193.

† Rule, *Oriental Records, Monumental*, pp. 209-211.

times undesigned utterances and allusions, which elsewhere have been denied. Indeed, no portion of classical literature should be neglected, if we would understand our subject. We must not be startled if we find that quite frequently magic, and other superstitions, had more influence to captivate and sway the common mind than all the great gods and goddesses.

The poets and tragic writers have furnished us with many noble expressions concerning God. "No one is free but Zeus," says Æschylus. And again: "He fills the world, and is above it." He is called by Terpander "the beginning of all things, and the conductor of all." Pindar says that "God governeth all things according to his will;" and again: "Zeus obtained something more than what the gods possessed." Xenophanes gives utterance to the noble thought: "There is but one God, greatest among men and gods, and not like mortals in form or mind." Hesiod speaks of "the eye of Zeus, which sees all and knows all." In Homer, Zeus is called "the father, the most glorious, the greatest, who rules over all—mortals and immortals." Sophocles has a pure ideal, when he says: "Courage, courage, my child! There is still in heaven the great Zeus, who watches over all things and rules. Commit thy exceeding bitter grief to him,

and be not too angry against thy enemies, nor forget them."

There is an approximation to the Golden Rule in Isocrates: "Do not to others what you would not suffer from them, and be towards others what you would wish I should be towards you." Hesychius makes an ancient hero, Bonzyges, say more clearly: "Do to others what you would should be done to you." There is no one good but God—all men are sinners. God looks favorably on the pious, and cherishes them in life and after death. He delighteth more in a pure heart than in all sacrifices. Says Menander: "Finish your sacrifice to God with faith, being just and adorned with purity of soul as with a brilliant garment. If you hear the thunder, do not fly, since your conscience makes you no reproach; for God seeth you, and holdeth himself near you." "Good thoughts are the greatest gift of God," says Æschylus. "Worship is due the gods," says Aristotle, "because they are the source of the greatest benefits we have received, and we owe them intelligence as well as life."

We present from the tragic writers a few more sentences:

"Look thou on him who looks on all from heaven,
Guardian of suffering men,

Who, worn with toil, unto their neighbors come
As suppliants, and receive not justice due.
Zeus, the true suppliant's god,
Abides, by wail of sufferer, unappeased."

"For not a subject hastening at the beck
Of strength above his own,
Reigns he subordinate to mightier powers;
Nor does he pay this homage from below,
While one sits throned in majesty above.
Act is for him as speech,
To hasten what his teeming mind resolves."

"Zeus, who leadeth man in wisdom's way,
And fixeth fast the law,
Wisdom by pain to gain."

"O Zeus, whate'er he be,
If that name please him well,
By that on him I call!
Weighing all other names, I fail to guess
Aught else but Zeus, if I would cast aside
Clearly in every deed,
From off my soul, this weight of care."*

Socrates taught that "there is a Being whose eye pierces throughout all nature, and whose ear is open to every sound; extending through all time, extending to all places; and whose bounty and care can know no other bounds than those fixed by his own creation."†

* Müller, *Science of Language*, Second Series, pp. 460, 461;
Brace, *The Unknown God*, pp. 90-101.

† Xenophon, *Memorabilia* i, 4.

Zeus is the lord of the upper regions, dwelling especially on the summits of the most lofty mountains, where he gathers about him the dark storm-clouds, shakes the world with his thunder, and hurls the fiery bolts in his wrath. The Olympian deities form with Zeus a family, over which he presides in patriarchal dignity. They are unable to stay the tide of his power, to thwart his will, or to ruffle the deep serenity of his soul. His tremendous nod confirms decrees which no power can frustrate. He has established the eternal order of events, and himself submits the Fates of his own appointment. The destinies of nations and of men are in his hands. He sets kings upon their thrones, and he sanctions human laws. He watches over social rights, secures the fulfillment of contracts, and holds all men to the observance of their oaths. He sees the guilty and the unjust, and attends to the punishment of all wickedness. He is mild and merciful, but has no respect for the treacherous, the arrogant, and the cruel. He is interested in the deliberations of assemblies. He is the god of hospitality, and regards the stranger and the poor. He presides over property, and watches over fences and landmarks. All suppliants are under his peculiar protection, and all dwellings are in his keeping. He sends wealth or poverty, health or

sickness, hunger or plenty. He is the father of music and song. He is all-seeing, all-knowing, all-wise, all-sufficing, all-causing, and all-accomplishing. He is the god of armies, and maintains liberty among men.

There is another side to the character of Zeus which must have been due to mythology and the poets. He is subject to passion and frailty; he feels pleasure and pain; he is refreshed with ambrosial food; he inhales the savor of sacrifices. Zeus met with many adventures in his loves. He was often moved by anger, jealousy, and hatred. There were factions in his court, and conspiracies against his government. He sometimes quarrels, is not always steadfast in purpose, is controlled by desire, and harbors resentment. He storms at other gods, and resorts to unseemly violence.

The popular god was doubtless this Zeus, with all his very serious imperfections. He is subject to all the infirmities of the flesh. He is not eternal; his life had a beginning, and, according to the belief of some, will have an end. Sometimes he seems to possess little power, and other gods can beard him with a measure of success. He is not faultless in his moral character in any of the relations of life. He dethroned his father, proved unfaithful to his wife on re-



STATUE OF ZEUS OLYMPIOS.
(By Pheidias.)

peated occasions, and abused his own children. Together with many noble traits of character were combined great weakness and monstrous wickedness. The science of mythology explains, to be sure, the origin of many of these inconsistencies; but these explanations do not change the character of the Zeus in whom the general popular heart believed.

Zeus did not become the chief of the gods without a struggle. According to the oldest writers on the origin of things, Uranos and Gæa, or Heaven and Earth, gave birth to the Titans, of whom Cronos was the youngest. Of the same parentage were also the Cyclopes; and also Cottos, Briareos, and Gyes, each of whom had fifty heads and a hundred arms. Uranos was displeased when he saw his monstrous offspring, and thrust them back again into the bosom of Gæa. The mother, vexed at this outrage on the part of her royal husband, called upon her sons to avenge her wrongs. Not one dared to raise his arm against his father, except Cronos. Arming himself with a sickle, or curved sword, Cronos waylaid and wounded his father, and from the drops of blood which fell from the wounds sprang the Furies and the Giants. Cronos now reigned with his wife Rhea, who was also his sister.

The Cyclopes became dangerous because of their enormous strength. Cronos feared that if left to themselves they might some day hurl him from his throne. He determined, while he was able, to guard against a calamity which might soon be without remedy. He imprisoned the Cyclopes beneath the earth, where, in volcanic regions—especially at Mount Etna, and on the Lipara Islands and Lemnos—they assist Hephæstos at his forge. Their names—Bronte, Sterope, and Arges—speak of the flashes of the flame and the mutterings of the voices of volcanic eruptions.

Now, Uranos and Gæa had informed Cronos of another danger. They foretold to him that he was destined to be dethroned by one of his own children. To guard against this new danger, he swallowed all of his children as soon as they were born—Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, and Poseidon. When Zeus was born, Rhea gave her lord a stone, wrapped in swaddling clothes, which he swallowed instead of his infant son. Now, Rhea sent Zeus away to Crete, where he was brought up and educated.

There are different and contradictory traditions concerning these early matters. Zeus was placed under the tuition of Nymphs, and even their names have been preserved. They are

characteristically three in number : Thisoa, Neda, and Hagno.

On a mountain called Thaumasion there was, in the time of Pausanias, a cave called Rhea's Cave, which only women sacred to the goddess may enter. Here it was that she cheated Cronos, giving a stone to swallow in the stead of a child. Tradition points to Mount Lycæus as the place of his birth.*

Zeus gave his father an emetic, by means of which he was made to disgorge the children whom he had swallowed.

The stone which he had swallowed was preserved at Delphi, anointed every day, and at festivals crowned with wool. Pausanias says that stone-worship was the oldest worship among the Greeks. Almost every temple had its sacred stone. The Argives had a rude stone called Zeus Cappotas. The oldest idol of the Thespians was a stone. Another stone was preserved beneath the pedestal of Apollo at Delos. In the Achæan Pharæ were thirty squared stones, each bearing the name of a god.

There are but few traces of the worship of Cronos. He had a temple at the foot of the Acropolis in Athens, and sacrifices were offered to him annually on Olympus.

* Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, viii, 36.

Zeus, with his brothers, rebelled against his father, and, after ten years, was victorious, and thrust him into Tartarus, where he was guarded by the hundred-handers. Another account says that he went to the Island of the Blest, where he ruled over the departed, and, in connection with Rhadamanthus, judged the shades. Plutarch places him on an island in the northern seas, where he is guarded by the hundred-handed Briareus. Whatever may have been his destiny, he received, as we have seen, but small consideration from the religions of the Greeks.

Zeus, in this great war against his father, had let loose the Cyclopes, and they furnished him with thunder-bolts.

Some of the philosophers have little respect for Hesiod and Homer, who have preserved for us so many stories of the crimes of the gods. When Pythagoras descended to the shades, "he saw the soul of Hesiod bound to a brazen pillar, and gnashing its teeth, and that of Homer suspended from a tree, and snakes around it as a punishment for the things that they had said of the gods."*

Legends concerning conflicts with primitive giants, sometimes monsters in form, and always of superhuman strength, are abundant in the

* Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Philosophers*, p. 347.

early myths of most of the nations of the earth. Possibly there may, in certain cases, be a reference to primordial races; but doubtless the meaning of these legends is largely exhausted when we connect them with the ever-recurring strug-



MOUNT OLYMPUS.

gle between the bright and the dark powers of nature and the later geologic preparation of the world for its present inhabitants.

Speaking of the war of the gods against the Titans, Lenormant says: "The localization and the epic form with which Hesiod has clothed this narrative were influenced by the tradition of a

great convulsion of the terrestrial crust, occasioned by the breaking forth of subterranean fires, the scene of action being the Grecian countries, and the witnesses the men already inhabiting them,—doubtless that convulsion known to geologists as the upheaval of Ténarus, the last of the Plutonian crises which overwhelmed the ancient world, the effect of which was felt from the center of France to the coasts of Syria. . . . The men who witnessed this frightful convulsion of nature naturally imagined themselves to be in the midst of a battle of the Titans, issued forth from the Chthonian Sea against the celestial powers, combined with the Hecatonchirs, other terrestrial forces in conflict with the Titans, and their imagination depicted these tremendous adversaries, the ones stationed on the summit of Othrys, the others on the summit of Olympus, reciprocally endeavoring to crush each other by hurling burning rocks.” *

* Lenormant, *Beginnings of History*, pp. 361, 362.

II.

GODS AND HALF-GODS.

POSEIDON is placed by Gladstone among the five greater gods of Greece. The four remaining gods are Zeus, Hera, Apollo, and Athene. "These five deities are all of them strongly marked in individual character, widely different each from all the rest, and yet each effectually subordinated to the fundamental conditions of the system, in which the poet has assigned to them commanding positions. They are also particularly associated in this important respect, that each of them is based upon a single leading idea. It is not very easy to find, in every case, an English word which shall satisfactorily express this idea. For the present I would state the case as follows: The leading idea of Zeus is polity, taking this word as the rendering of the Greek *Politikê*. The leading idea of Poseidon is physical, not mental force; of Herê, nationality; of Athenê, mental force; and of Apollo, obedience, or conformity to the will of Zeus."*

The god which is the subject of Gladstone's

* Gladstone, *The Nineteenth Century*, March, 1887, p. 460.

study is the Homeric Poseidon. His original character can not be satisfactorily determined. A native and perhaps elemental god may have furnished the basis of this character, but the superstructure contains many foreign elements. He is the sea-god, and possessor of the trident; but he is also the god of the horse, the god of earthquakes, the god of the building art, the god of special families and races, and "the god who stands personally related to rebellious powers." Some of these functions he possesses in common with other divinities. He is the second of the three brothers of Cronos, among whom the dominion of the world was distributed by lot. While Zeus has the wide heaven and Aidoneus has the gloomy underworld, to Poseidon falls the gray sea. The earth is common to them all. The three brothers originally stood on an exact equality. Poseidon claims for himself the same rank with Zeus, and never admits even an advantage in point of age; but, on the other hand, he never resists. Zeus calls him "the oldest and the best of gods." Poseidon speaks as an equal when he says of Zeus: "Let him not bully me, as if I were a coward; but let him keep his big words for his own sons and daughters, who have no choice but to obey him."

This gray god of the sea is surpassed by Zeus alone in his relations with women and nymphs, and in his many lines of descendants. Briareus, the hundred-handed, known among mortals as Aigaion, is his son; and Thoosa, daughter of Phorcus, bore him Polyphemus. He is the father of Nausithoos and the royal line of Scheriè by Periboia. Turo bears to him Pelias and Neleus, and from Iphimedeia he has Otos and Ephialtes.* His paternal feeling seldom rises higher than brute instinct. His strength is not of intellect, but of hand; not of heart, but of gross physical frame. He seldom does anything suggestive of real divinity.

Nereus was the old elemental god of the sea, but since the arrival of Poseidon he has been banished to the deep sea. His greater successor is confined to the surface of the waters. He dwells in a palace, and the axle of his chariot is not wetted. In his own province his powers are conditional and limited, while other deities, unchallenged, invade his realm.

But the god has important relations to the land. He is the god of earthquakes. The mountains and the forests tremble under his feet. On one occasion he shook the earth so violently that the god of the underworld leaped

* Gladstone, *The Nineteenth Century*, March, 1887, p. 463.

from his throne, fearing lest the rocky crust should break and disclose to the eyes of the gods above his own dismal realm.

Poseidon was doubtless a foreign god, or the result of the fusion of the elements of a native and a foreign cult. He may have been introduced from Caria or Libya. Gladstone favors an origin from the south and the east, because of his relation to the horse, his epithet of *earthshaker*, and one of his titles drawn from the color of his hair, which was black, with a slight trace, hint, suspicion, or *soupeçon* of blue. He seems to have been the special god of the Eastern Æthiopians. As the god of foreigners who reached Greece from across the sea, he became very naturally the god of the sea.

In many parts of the Odysseus, Poseidon seems to have escaped the yoke of the Olympian system, and breathes a freer atmosphere and exercises more ample powers and prerogatives.

The worship of Poseidon was not confined to maritime States, but prevailed the most extensively near the coast. Human sacrifices were offered, horses were buried alive, and his companions were "wild Titans and spiteful demons." The Hellenes never entirely abandoned his worship, and he always maintained his position and

character as god of the sea. "Even where he was worshiped in the interior, men believed they heard the salt-waves resounding under his temple."*

His temple at Mycale was the center of the federal institutions which originated in Miletus and Ephesus, and which united twelve cities.

His most famous festival was that celebrated every second year on the Isthmus of Corinth. The pine was sacred to him, and a row of these trees stood near his temple on the isthmus. A wreath of pine-leaves was the prize of victory at the Isthmian games.

He is represented in works of art holding a trident, and with a dolphin on his hand or under his feet. Sometimes he rides a bull, a horse, or a sea-horse, or rides in a chariot, and is often surrounded by the Nereids and other fabulous inhabitants of the sea.

The character of Apollo is one of the most attractive of the whole Olympian court, and has been studied with almost affectionate reverence. His worship was probably foreign, and may have been introduced from Lycia or Crete; but it soon became an important part of the Hellenic system. Apollo was now made the son and interpreter of Zeus.

* Curtius, *History of Greece*, Vol. I, p. 65.

“Apollo rises on the vision of one familiar with Greek antiquity as almost a pure conception, almost an angelic divinity. To a form of ideal beauty, combining youthful grace and vigor with the fullest perfection of manly strength, he added unerring wisdom, complete insight into futurity, an unstained life, the magic power of song, ability and will to save and heal, together with the dread prerogative of dealing out at his pleasure destruction and death. Compassionate on occasions as Mercy herself, he shows at times the keen and awful severity of a destroying archangel. *Ekobolos*, ‘striking from afar,’ he speeds his fatal shafts from his unfailing bow, and smites whomsoever he will with a death-stroke which there is no escaping. Never offended without cause, never moved by caprice, he works the will of Zeus in all that he does—dispenses retributive justice, and purifies with wholesome fear the souls of men. Partaker of all the counsels of his father, and permitted to use his discretion in communicating them to the denizens of earth, he delivers his oracular responses from the various spots which he has chosen as his special abodes; and, though sometimes his replies may be of doubtful import, he seldom sends away a votary unsatisfied. The answers which he gives, or, at any rate, is sup-

posed to give, determine the decisions of statesmen and shape the course of history. War and peace, treaties and alliances, are made and unmade as the Delphic and other oracles, inspired by him, advise; and the course of Hellenic colonization is almost entirely determined by his decrees. Poet, prophet, physician, harper, god of victory and angel of death in one, Apollo is always on the side of right—always true to Zeus, and not much inferior to him in power.”*

An analogy has been traced between Apollo and the Son of God. Gladstone says: “In Apollo are represented the legendary anticipations of a person to come, in whom should be combined all the great offices in which God the Son is now made known to man—as the Light of our paths, the Physician of our diseases, the Judge of our misdeeds, and the Conqueror and Disarmer, but not Abolisher, of death.”† The character of Apollo is shown in his active embracement of the will of Zeus. Returning to this subject, Gladstone says: “To this most curious and striking feature of the Apollo, I am not aware that anything analogous has been found in what are commonly known as Aryan tradi-

* Rawlinson, *The Religions of the Ancient World*, pp. 188–190.

† Gladstone, *Homer and the Homeric Age*, Vol. II, p. 132.



BRONZE STATUE OF APOLLO—THE COLOSSUS OF RHODES.
(One of the Seven Wonders.)

tions, or in the results of Egyptian research. When we approach the Semitic province, there is a change. In the Assyrian system, as it is set forth in the volume of Professor Sayce, the character of Merodach appears to be related to that of the god Hea, his father, in a manner much corresponding with the relation between the Apollo and the Zeus of Homer. We are now brought upon ground where remarkable coincidences have already been disclosed, although it is impossible to forecast the bearings of future Assyrian discoveries on what has been already found. But if Merodach exhibits a correspondence with the Homeric conception, he corresponds also with what may be his Semitic original; namely, the undeveloped but most significant tradition recorded in the book of Genesis respecting a future Deliverer, who was to bruise the serpent's head, and to undo his work by restoring mankind to that very union with the highest will which had been broken by transgression, and of which the Homeric Apollo exhibits an unvarying and finished example.* This is a daring comparison, but it has reason and weight.

The advent of Apollo-worship marked an epoch in the history of Greece. "It resembled

* Gladstone, *The Nineteenth Century*, May, 1887, p. 751.

a second day of creation in the history of their spiritual development." Great advancement was made in the social order, and improvements in all that pertained to Hellenic civilization were inaugurated on every hand. Religion became more spiritual, music and song gave expression to the pure joys of the heart, man was brought into a closer and more blessed communion with the gods, and the voice of great Zeus was heard in the inspired utterances of the prophets. The power of the Erinnyes was broken, the cry of the penitent was heard and his sin pardoned, and a reign of divine grace began.

The religion of Apollo had its different phases. In the mountain and forest worship of Hylates, on Cyprus, and among the Magnetes, wild customs prevailed. Apollo as Delphinus is a sea-god; and at Delphi he is "the god of light and right, who guides the course of States, the spiritual center of the whole Hellenic world. In this Apollo, Hellenic polytheism received its harmonious completion, and the loftiest glorification of which it was capable."*

There had been, before the days of Homer, a cult of the sun-god within Achæan territory. The prevailing worship of Ithaca seems to have been sun-worship, as Gladstone has made out

*Curtius, History of Greece. Vol. I. pp. 67. 68.

with great probability.* The ruling name of Phœbus was given to this nature-power, and "this sun-god grows into and forms what may be called the material and popular basis for the Homeric Apollo." The latter is the god of the influence of the sun on nature, while, as his subordinate, Helios guides the orb in his daily course; just as Artemis personifies the power of the moon, while Selene guides her course.

Apollo was the son of Zeus and Leto, and was born on the island of Delos, which Pindar says had been a barren rock, floating about in the sea, but was at that time made stationary by being fastened down by pillars. The same also happened to Rhodes, the center of the worship of Helios. The child-god immediately seized a bow, and announced his purpose to found an oracle. His father gave him a lyre, a miter wherewith to bind his hair, and a car drawn by swans. He set out for Delphi; but the swans carried him off to their home among the Hyperboreans, whence he returned not till the succeeding summer. The solar character of these myths is unquestionable. Apollo gave oracles at other places besides Delphi, and communicated the prophetic gift to certain mortals. He was the leader of the Muses, and was jealous of his gift.

*Gladstone, *The Nineteenth Century*, May, 1887.

He caused Marsyas to be flayed alive, because he boasted his skill in playing the flute; and caused the ears of Midas to grow long, because he sided with Pan, who held the flute to be a better instrument than the lyre. It is not, however, our purpose to pursue the myths which have gathered around Apollo.

A round of festivals kept always in view the god in his relations to nature. Perhaps the most remarkable was the Carneia, which, in the month of August, engaged the attention of the whole population of Sparta, who withdrew from the town for several days, and lived in tents, as if to avoid the intense heat of the season. In July they held a nine-days' festival, called the Hyacinthia, which celebrates the transitoriness of life, but also faith in its return. The May festival of Thargelia celebrated the ripening of the fruits; and the August festival of Metageitnia recognized him as the god of plenty, and promoted good fellowship among neighbors. These two festivals belonged to Athens. At Delphi two festivals were especially conspicuous—at the beginning of winter and at the beginning of spring, when Apollo was supposed to visit the Hyperborean regions and return to his sacred seat. At Thebes every eighth year the Daphnephoria was celebrated in honor of Isme-

nios Apollo, when a branch of olive was carried in procession, hung with three hundred and sixty-five wreaths, and representations of the sun, moon, planets, and stars.

The worship of Apollo was introduced in Rome in B. C. 320, when the city was visited by a pestilence.

The principal symbols of the god were the bow, the lyre, the tripod, the laurel, the palm, the wolf, the deer, and the raven. Art, in its ripest period, sought to combine in him the strength of manhood and the perfection of eternal youth. His long hair is usually tied in a knot above his forehead. When represented as the leader of the Muses, his tresses fall about his shoulders, and his long drapery is girt at the waist.

Athene, as a nature-goddess, may have been originally a personification of the bright upper regions of the sky. As Pallas, she was connected with storms.

Athene, in the Olympian Assembly, sat on the left side of Zeus, Hera sitting on his right side. She was the goddess of war, and was armed with spear and helmet, and the dread *ægis* of her father. While Apollo sometimes took the *ægis* in hand at the command of Zeus, she assumed it spontaneously. She was resist-



STATUE OF PALLAS ATHENE.

less among heroes, and was, as we shall see, more than a match for Ares himself. She also fostered the arts of peace, and invented spinning and weaving, the art of taming horses, the flute, and the healing art. She was the goddess of polity, and of personal discipline and superintendence.

Zeus, according to ancient story, swallowed his wife Metis, "intelligence," and Athene sprang from his head full-grown. She has been called "a conscious impersonation of the divine wisdom." By many she has been considered an almost faultless ideal female character. Homer ranks her with Zeus and Apollo. She combined purity, wisdom, and strength; and her influence was healthful and ennobling. She was worshiped with sacrifices, prayers, and festivals.

"It is difficult, if not impossible, to describe in a single word the base, or leading idea, of the Homeric Athenê. The shortest account, perhaps, that can be given of her, so as to convey a living idea, is that she is the Olympian reflection of Odysseus. Like him, she is *polutropos*—many-sided, and full of resource. Like his, her purpose is of iron, her methods are of the material, be it hard or soft; best adapted to the purpose, whatever it may be. Like him, she can not be small, she must be large; but she may be

either true or untrue as the occasion requires. Like, though even beyond him, she is full of forethought, has no waste of power, is always in measure, never in excess. In fact, these types of character are so wedded to one another that we may go a long way with the absolute parallel before we reach those points, as it were upon the fringe of each, where the lines diverge — where the human would pass from consummate art into exaggeration, if it were absolutely assimilated to the divine.

“In him, as a man, limitation is necessary; in her, it is less trace-

able, as to her relations to the earth and man, than in any other deity. Though he never fails, yet he may put up with a drawn battle, as in the Games. Her success, from a practical point of view, is always assured. The culminating threat of Zeus to the assembled gods (Il. viii, 18-27) is forthwith softened down for her (39, 40). Odysseus is, in more than one case, carried away by pas-



PALLAS ATHENE.

sion into pure error of judgment, with destructive consequences. The nearest approach to error that I can find in the conduct of Pallas is in the eighth Iliad. . . . She has no grace, but much tact. She is not, except in jealousy, womanish; but she never wholly ceases to be feminine—never is she rough or coarse in her dealings with men. She never enters personally, like Herê, into collision with Zeus. The reproach against Herê by her husband—that she would like to eat Priam and his children raw (iv, 35)—is one that would be utterly incongruous if addressed to Athene. . . . She is perpetually thinking of the affairs and interests of those she cares for, when they are themselves unmindful; and she makes provision for them by unsolicited, as well as by solicited, intervention. She never enters into mere contests of the tongue—never wastes a word. Athene, of the flashing eye, presents to us a marked contrast between the different internal centers of responsible action. Her intellect is a bow always strung; it is ever ready, and alive; but her emotional nature is as constantly under bit and bridle. The worst threats of Zeus do not stir any passion, nor even fear; they are received with a low murmur (Il. iv, 20), or in silence (viii, 436). She is only bored or vexed (*tetiemenê*) at the



ABDUCTION OF CASSANDRA FROM THE TEMPLE OF PALLAS.
(Siege of Troy.)

obstacle placed for the moment in the way of her plans. With so much power, and such regulation of it, it is in her nature to inspire the human mind with a degree of faith and confidence, of which we have no other equally striking example."*

He speaks of the Homeric goddess.

Hayman brings a heavy bill of charges against the character of Athene. She never feels any tenderness or affection; she acknowledges no obligation, and she is absolutely without pity. She is busy and restless, unscrupulous in partnership, astute in policy, and profound in dissimulation. She is keenly satirical and crafty, and comprehends no motives except those which are base. She mocks the weak, and exults over them. While faithful in behalf of a comrade, she is yet heartless. She loves Odysseus for his roguery and cunning. Indeed, these are the qualities which she would doubtless most heartily commend. Withal she would avoid no hazard to back a friend, and is always ready and prompt. These considerations can not but seriously deduct from our admiration for her character.†

Zeus, Athene, and Apollo are in several respects placed far above all other divinities of the

* Gladstone, *The Nineteenth Century*, July, 1887, pp. 81, 82.

† Mahaffy, *Social Life in Greece*, pp. 41, 42.

Greek Pantheon. Gladstone, in his masterly analysis of the character of Athene, in speaking of the accordances of this goddess with Apollo, mentions no less than thirteen important qualities or properties by which they are jointly distinguished.



THE PARTHENON—TEMPLE OF PALLAS ATHENE, FROM THE GROVE OF ACADEMUS.

We must understand him as treating only of the Homeric divinities. Both have a special and exceptional parentage. They are peculiarly associated with Zeus in worship; and, as if they were sharers of his supreme power, both carry the ægis, the symbol of supreme authority. They exercise power in the operations of nature “out-

side their particular Olympian prerogatives." Aside from Zeus, they are the only divinities distinctly named as having part in that providence which directs the affairs of men. They, too, exhibit to men visible manifestations of their providential office. Neither makes use of instruments or secondary causes to produce corporal or mental effects. Both administer punishment by their own authority. They spontaneously recognize and act upon the moral order of the world. In the exercise of their powers and prerogatives they overlap the provinces of other duties even in their most pronounced specialties. They are set free from the limitations of space and sense. Prayer is addressed to them in all places. There are no stages recognized in their journeys. Neither of these deities is ever stated to drink, or eat, or sleep. They are never wearied, they are never wounded, and they never suffer pain. No passion ever disturbs their pure hearts. Athene remained the maiden goddess, and Apollo, in his Homeric character; seems never to have been moved by sexual desire. There is a passage in the "Iliad" which has been understood to signify that Apollo ravished Marpessa, but the passage yields to a different explanation. Neither of these divinities is associated with any local home, and their worship is not subject to local limitations.

They exercise powers not within the course of nature or human experience. They assume at will various forms, and change the processes of nature. For illustrations of these several points the reader must be referred to the brilliant article of Gladstone, where they are worked out in much detail.*

We now come to the discussion of the character of the last of the greater gods of Greece. Hera, like most of the early Grecian divinities, was doubtless at first of Pelasgian, or at least of foreign, origin. She seems to have represented the fruitful earth, and her divine marriage with Zeus was the ever-repeated union between Heaven and Earth.

The ancient Ayran idea derived all life from a divine pair, whose fertility suggested the conception of them as a bull and a cow. Zeus, in the form of a bull, carried off Europa. According to Hesychius, Europa is an epithet of Hera. She is sometimes presented to us as the moon-goddess under the epithet Eileithyia. Eubœa is one of her epithets, the name of one of her nurses, the name of the island in which she was brought up, and the name of the mountain at whose foot was her most celebrated temple. But this word, as

* Gladstone, *The Nineteenth Century*, July 1887, pp. 92-102.

well as her epithet Bounaia, contains the word meaning *cow*.

She is represented at Samos by the simple symbol of a plank, and at Thespiæ by a branch. In some of the paintings she is hardly to be distinguished from Artemis and Aphrodite. In Tiryns and Mycenæ, Henry Schliemann found cow-headed figures, which he maintained are idols of this goddess. The horns—those of Isis as well; there was probably some connection between Egypt and Mycenæ—may be the symbolic horns of the crescent representing the moon. We may consider her epithet “cow-eyed,” of Homer, as an interesting survival of her early character.*

In her character as a Greek goddess, she was queen of heaven, and seemed to exercise all the authority of her lord. She presided over child-birth, and her daughters, the Eileithyïæ, act as her ministers. The patroness of marriages, she was ever true to her own marital relations, and demanded perfect purity among her devotees. She was strong, haughty, full of intense hates and likings, and justly jealous of her husband. The poets relate her bitter persecutions of the heroines, who became the objects of her husband’s unholy passion. She was much worshiped, and with

*Schliemann, Mycenæ and Tiryns, pp. vi, vii, 10-13, 19-22, 362-364.

true devotion, and had many temples, many statues, and many altars to which the faithful resorted.

In the Olympian court, the rank of Hera is clearly recognized. She is at once the sister and wife of Zeus; the gods rise from their seats as she enters the council; and she participates in certain prerogatives of her lord. Like Athene, she is permitted to wield the thunder-bolt, she never exercises any influence by personal contact with mortals, but by the direct action of the mind, and she commands the services of other deities. The nationality of her character gave her a large place in the heart of Greece.

But her character sometimes descends very low. She may almost be called a scold and termagant. She is deceitful, full of mischievous tricks, fractious, and rough-tongued. She lies, and swears to it; and overreaches her husband, not by intellect, but by artifice. She loses the respect of the gods, and Homer is not in love with her character.

She possesses great energy of character, but lacks all those other qualities which make Athene great and majestic. Though occupying so conspicuous a position, she suffers in comparison with Leto, whose action in Homer is so insignificant. The poet feels the utmost reverence for Leto, and always treats her with honor, and on all occasions

carefully shields her from disparagement. Hera is treated quite otherwise. A legend is recorded that she was severely wounded in the right breast by Heracles, and yet no punishment seems to have been accorded for the offense; indeed, no notice whatever seems to have been taken of the affair. Zeus is repeatedly roused to anger against his spouse, and launches threats at her again and again. In connection with Heracles she was subjected to severe corporal punishment by her lord. On one occasion she was suspended from heaven with chained hands, and anvils attached to her feet. So terrible is this punishment that the rest of the Olympian court are roused to indignation.

The respect which she receives from the other great divinities is not so much because of her personal qualities of mind and heart, as because of her conspicuous position as the wife of the king of the gods.*

“ Her mythological presentation was certainly not of a nature to improve the character of those women who might take her for their model; since, although she was possessed of certain great qualities—passion, fervor, strong affection, self-command, courage, acuteness—yet she was, on the whole, wanting in the main elements of female

* Gladstone, *The Contemporary Review*, February 1888, pp. 181, 182.

excellence—gentleness, softness, tenderness, patience, submission to wrong, self-renunciation, reticence. She was a proud, grand, haughty, powerful queen; not a kind, helpful, persuasive, loving woman.”*

Ares, the son of Zeus and Hera, was the god of battles—“a personification of the wild, impetuous spirit with which battles were fought.” He was splendidly armed with helmet, shield, cuirass, and spear—swift of foot, great of size, unsatiable of war, furious, raging, murderous. His companions were Fury, Strife, Dread, and Alarm. He was largely, however, under the authority of Apollo and Athene, to whom he was compelled to yield. His worship is thought to have been introduced from Thrace, and the roughness of his character precluded its general adoption by the refined Hellenes.

Diomedes, with the assistance of Athene, wounded Ares, and

“The furious god

Uttered a cry as of nine thousand men,
Or of ten thousand, rushing to the fight.”

And when to avenge himself, he aimed his huge spear at Athene,

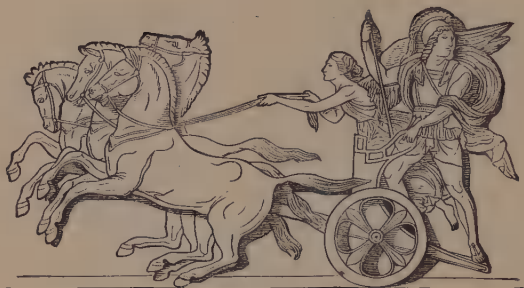
“She only stepped

Backward a space, and with her powerful hand

* Rawlinson, *The Religions of the Ancient World*, p. 196.

Lifted a stone that lay upon the plain,
 Black, huge, and jagged, which the men of old
 Had placed there for a laudmark. This she hurled
 At Mars, and struck him on the neck; he fell
 With nervous limbs, and covered, as he lay,
 Seven acres of the field." *

Hephæstus, was the god of fire, and most skillful in smelting and metallurgy. He was the



ARES.

artificer of the gods, forged the thunder-bolts of Zeus, and provided the gods with armor and war-like weapons. In pre-Hellenic times he may have been an elemental god. Zeus cast him out of heaven. Addressing his mother Hera, he says :

“ For hard it is to strive with Jupiter.
 Already once, when I took part with thee,
 He seized me by the foot and flung me o’er
 The battlements of heaven. All day I fell,
 And with the setting sun I struck the earth

* Homer, *The Iliad*—Bryant’s Translation, v, 1075-1077; xxi, 499-506.

In Lemnos. Little life was left in me,
What time the Sintians took me from the ground."

Legends concerning dwarfed and grotesque, and yet strong and skillful workers in metals, are widely extended among many nations. Hephæstus made sport for the gods.

" As they beheld
Lame Vulcan laboring o'er the palace-floor,
An inextinguishable laughter broke
From all the blessed gods."*

" He spoke and rose, a wondrous bulk, from his anvil-block, limping, and his weak legs moved actively beneath him. The bellows he laid apart from the fire, and all the tools with which he labored he collected into a silver chest. With a sponge he wiped, all over, his face and both his hands, his strong neck and shaggy breast; then put on his tunic, and seized his stout scepter. But he went out of the doors limping, and golden handmaids, like unto living maidens, moved briskly about the king; and in their bosoms was prudence with understanding, and within them was voice and strength; and they are instructed in books by the immortal gods. These were busily occupied by the king's side; but he, hob-

*Homer, *The Iliad* — Bryant's Translation, i, 746-752; 757-760.

bling along, sat down upon a splendid throne near where Thetis was." *

Such was his appearance when consulted concerning the shield of Achilles :

"It is characteristic of the many-sidedness of the Greeks, and consequent upon the anthropomorphism which makes the Olympic community a reflection of earthly things, that there should be, even in this august conclave, something provocative of laughter, a discord to break the monotony of the harmony, an element of grotesqueness and monstrosity." †

The marriage of Hephæstus and Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, satisfied their sense of the humorous and ludicrous.

The ancient Greeks paid Hephæstus no worship. Small images of this god, however, stood on every hearth at Athens, and "the Amphidromia round the hearth-fire was the rite whereby the newly-born child was adopted into the family." In the old Greek art, he is represented as a bearded man in full dress, carrying a hammer; but in his later workman's clothes he has an undignified and comic appearance.

Hermes was "the god of social life and intercourse in general, of streets and doorways, and

* Homer, *The Iliad*—Buckley's Translation, xviii, 410-424.

† Rawlinson, *The Religions of the Ancient World*, pp. 192, 193.

of the palæstra." He is the impersonation of cleverness and commercial smartness, the god of invention, and the patron of thieves. He has been called "the Olympian man of business." He carries messages, undertakes important missions, and secures worldly prosperity. He became the god of wisdom and learning, but his wisdom was strictly of a business and worldly character, and he was far from careful of the means which he employed, so that he accomplished his purposes. He was always "active, energetic, fruitful in resource, a keen bargainer, a bold storyteller, and a clever thief." His practical shrewdness and kindness made him the valued patron of travelers and the cherished friend of the weary. In his nature there was an element of humor and drollery, which often served him well. He invented speech, eloquence, the alphabet, weights and measures, numbers, and music. The representations show him in his early manhood. His head and ankles are winged, to symbolize his swiftness of movement. He exchanged his lyre with Apollo for the caduceus or rod of wealth, which served also as a herald's staff. The statue of Praxiteles, in the Heraion at Olympia, represents the god leaning with his left hand on a rock, and supporting thereon the infant Bacchus. The right arm has been lost.

The mythological relations of Hermes are difficult to trace, and still more difficult to explain. He is sometimes connected with the mysterious Cabiri. In the hymn to Aphrodite, Hermes and the Sileni are the companions of the mountain nymphs, and in Arcadia he is the father of Pan by



ARTEMIS OF THE
EPHESIANS.

Penelope. For the full treatment of the questions suggested by such relations larger works must be consulted.

Artemis, the twin sister of Apollo, possessed in a less pronounced degree the same attributes with her divine brother—purity, chastity, majesty, skill in archery, and ministry of death. She was endowed with the same exalted type of beauty, and even took part with her brother in his favorite music and dance. In one respect she differed from Apollo—she was the goddess of the chase, and haunted the mountains and forests accompanied by her hounds, rejoicing in her favorite pursuit. As Apollo was the god of the sun, she was the goddess of the moon. This may have been grafted on her original character. “The



TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS, AT EPHESUS.
(One of the Seven Wonders.)

spread of vegetation from the dew under a peaceful moonlight was ascribed to her influence." At her annual festival on the sixteenth of April, cakes were made in the form of the moon when in the full, and stuck over with lights. Her influence was especially felt near springs, streams, on the sea, and in marshy places. Young girls were under her special protection, and dedicated to her a lock of their hair or some other trifle. She honored youth, innocence, and modesty, and was withal a beautiful character.

The Asiatic Artemis was quite different. Orestes is said to have brought an image of the goddess from the Crimea to Sparta, where her worship demanded human sacrifices. These sacrifices were commuted by Lycurgus, but this survival still remained in the flogging of youths at her altar. The Carians and the Leleges worshiped Artemis in the form of an image which was believed to have fallen from heaven. The wealth and splendor of her temple at Ephesus is celebrated in history. She was the nature goddess, and an impersonation of fecundity in nature. When we study her history, we must bear in mind this double character.

Aphrodite may have been originally an Asiatic deity, introduced from Phœnicia through Cyprus. She was the goddess of love and beauty ; but the

love was not pure, noble, and divine, but the rather sensual; and so, too, the beauty was physical rather than intellectual and moral. The Greek was drawn to this goddess and fascinated by her charms, and yet in his heart despised her, and was discontented under her influence. "Silly and childish, easily tricked and imposed upon, Aphrodite is mentally contemptible, while morally she is odious. Tyrannical over the weak, cowardly before the strong, frail herself, and the persistent storer up of frailty in others, lazy, deceitful, treacherous, selfish, shrinking from the least touch of pain, she repels the moral sentiment with a force almost equal to that with which she attracts the lower animal nature." *

Her usual symbols were the dove, swan, dolphin, hare, goat, and tortoise. In Paphos she was worshiped under the form of a ball or pyramid surrounded by burning torches. "In the best days of art every charm of beauty was exhausted for her statues," culminating in the Aphrodite at Cnidus, by Praxiteles.

Hestia was perhaps the latest in origin of the greater gods. She presided over the altar-fire and all sacrifices, and claimed a portion of every offering. Her sacred fire was kept always burn-

* Rawlinson, *The Religions of the Ancient World*, p. 201.

ing, and when by accident it was extinguished, it was rekindled by friction or from the rays of the sun. She was the goddess of the fireside, the hearth, and the home, and the art of house-building was ascribed to her. She protected suppliants who fled to her hearth for refuge, and preserved the purity, sweetness, peace, and joy of the home. Modesty and virtue were under her gracious protection. "She upheld among the Greeks the idea of virginal purity as a transcendental phase of life—a moral perfection whereto the best and purest might not only aspire, but attain, as the result of earnest endeavor."

Hestia presided over not only the domestic, but also the city, the tribal, and the national hearths; and in the later mystic philosophy this became the hearth of the universe and the eternal fire at the center of the world.

The magistrates of the city met around the common hearth-fire, and there the sacred rites that sanctify the peace of city life were performed. Since the hearth was the home of this goddess, she possessed few special temples. In her temple in Hermione the sacred fire was her only symbol. She may have had another temple at Olympia.

Demeter, "the earth-mother," was the goddess



FESTIVAL IN HONOR OF DEMETER—INITIATION INTO THE MYSTERIES.

of fertility. She was a universal deity, though more especially honored in certain places. The culture of cereals, the work of tillage, and the making of bread the Greeks learned from this beneficent and bountiful goddess. At the Thesmophoria, a festival at which only married women were present, she is said to have instituted the laws of life, especially of the married life of women. The Eleusinian mysteries, with their purifications, sacrifices, processions, torches, athletic games, fastings, solemn oaths of secrecy, and symbolic rites, wherein, in profound symbolism, were described the revivification of the earth after the death of winter, and the new life into which the soul is ushered after its passage through the gateway of death, were celebrated at Eleusis in her honor. The myth commemorated in this festival is one of the most interesting, and celebrated in the classics. Persephone, her daughter, while gathering flowers in the fields of Enna, in Sicily, is caught and borne away by Hades, to become his queen in the infernal regions. Her mother seeks her disconsolate, the earth refuses to yield her increase, and Zeus is compelled to permit the daughter to live half the year on the earth.

According to a legend, at the time when Hades was carrying off Persephone, a swineherd,

Eubuleus by name, chanced to be herding his swine on the very spot, and the whole herd vanished down the chasm which received the god and his prize. To commemorate this event, at the celebration of the Thesmophoria, pigs, branches of pine, and cakes of symbolic import were cast into the "chasms of Demeter and Persephone." A multitude of serpents consumed the flesh of the pigs; but at the end of the year certain women, who had undergone purification for three days, descended into the vaults, and, frightening the serpents away with the clapping of their hands, gathered up the remains and placed them on the altars. Whoever secured any of the decayed flesh, and sowed it in the field with his grain, was sure of a good crop.

In the sanctuary of Demeter and the Deities of the Lower World, at Cnidus, a chamber was discovered which contained the bones of pigs and marble images of pigs.*

On the fourth day of this festival was observed the ceremony of carrying the sacred basket in honor of the goddess.

"But radiant Hesper, from the starry skies,
Beholds the sacred basket as it flies:
Bright Hesper only could persuade the power
To quench her thirst, in that unhappy hour,

* Frazer, *Thesmophoria*, in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 295-297.

When, full of grief, she roam'd from place to place,
Her ravish'd daughter's latent steps to trace.
How could thy tender feet, O goddess! bear
The painful journey to the western sphere?
How couldst thou tread black Æthiop's burning climes,
Or that fair soil, in those distressful times,
Where, on the tree, the golden apple beams,
Nor eat, nor drink, nor bathe in cooling streams?

Hail, sacred power! Preserve this happy town
In peace and safety, concord and renown:
Let rich increase o'erspread the yellow plain;
Feed flocks and herds, and fill the ripening grain:
Let wreaths of olive still our brows adorn,
And those who plow'd the field shall reap the corn.*

Pausanias describes the annual festival called Chthonia as celebrated in Hermione. The priests of the gods and all the town authorities lead the procession, and the women and the men follow. Boys, clothed in white and garlanded with flowers of hyacinth, also form a procession. When they reach the temple, they let inside the sacred place a heifer, and the doors are immediately shut. Four old women receive the victim, and the one who can get a chance cuts the throat with a sickle. The doors are then opened, and a second, third, and sometimes even a fourth heifer is let in, and slain in the same manner. On whichever side the first heifer falls, all fall

* Callimachus, Hymn to Demeter, Tytler's translation, pp. 408, 413.

on the same side. The special object of their worship no one has ever seen. It is a secret with the four old women.

In Phigalia, Pausanius sacrificed to Demeter after the manner of the people of the land. The only offerings were, fruit, honeycomb, and wool just as it was taken from the sheep. These they lay on an altar in front of her cave, and pour oil over them all.*

Initiation into the Greek mysteries—by which we now mean the greater mysteries: those of the Cabiri, the Samothracian, the Dionysiac, the Mithraic, the Eleusinian, and possibly some others—was counted the highest honor. The privilege was granted at the first only to such of the priests as were prepared by education and quality, and those fortunate citizens who were to enter upon some important office of state. The benefits were of the largest moral and spiritual significance. The doctrines taught, either by word or by symbol, were the existence of one eternal God, the immortality of the soul in some form of existence, and the future moral judgment.

In an ancient hymn the priest says: "Go on in the right way, and contemplate the sole Governor of the world. He is One, and of himself

* Pausanius, *Description of Greece*, ii, 35; viii, 42.

alone, and to that one all things owe their being. He worketh through all, was never seen by mortal eyes, but doth himself see every one."

Our chief sources of information concerning these mysteries must be the early Christian fathers—notably Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius, whose accounts may be received as reliable; Plutarch, who writes as a philosophical historian; and Apuleius, who spins out tales most romantic, and is possibly least worthy of credit.

It would seem that the mysteries teach, in a manner highly dramatic, the purest morality. The candidate passes through certain stages of progress during the initiation, by which are symbolized, either in his own personal experience or by spectacular display, his death, judgment, and resurrection to a new life. The life of the gods in whose honor the mysteries are celebrated is also represented. By virtue of the sacred rites and teachings connected with the service, and the impressions wrought upon his mind and the change wrought in his heart, he may be happy both in this world and the world to come.

So much concerning these mysteries must forever remain concealed, that we can not pro-

nounce with confidence as to the details either of ritual or doctrine.

We may, however, offer one or two criticisms, which seem to be fatal to the possibility of any lasting influence towards the regeneration of society.

The mysteries were for the few. At a later period, indeed, they admitted all to their secrets; but, from the very nature of the initiatory service, only the few could understand the sacred meaning. The benefit which they bestowed upon the great mass of the people must have been exceedingly slight. That their influence over the morals and lives of the initiated was healthful, while the mysteries themselves retained their purity, we gladly admit; but such influence was not, could not be, abiding. Both the greater and the lesser mysteries lost their original purity. They afforded the opportunity for hidden crimes. They concealed uncleanness. Some of these festivals may have been obscene from the beginning; others introduced or fostered, or at least allowed and protected, wickedness. The Eleusinian mysteries maintained their purity longest, but even this service broke down at the last.

Important among the secondary gods of Greece was Dionysus, the son of Zeus and Semele, the god of the vine and of drunkenness. He intro-

duced the vine in Greece, taught its culture, and discovered the exhilarating effects of wine. His worship, whose center was Thebes in Bœotia, was connected with drunken orgies, furious and extravagant revelry, exciting music, wild dances, shrieks, cries, yells, ecstatic ravings, and sometimes even bloodshed. This god delivered from grief, and furnished the only medicine for troubles. The frantic ravings of the drunken devotee were received as indications of special inspiration, and his boisterous, senseless, and mad utterances were recognized as prophetic. The god filled the heart with courage, and the body with strength. Similar seems to have been the effect of the gases which rose from prophetic springs, or from crevices of the earth in prophetic caves—its intoxication leading to responses which were considered oracular, and the interpretation of which called for special qualifications.

The Bacchæ believed in the much-abused principle that to the pure all things are pure, and this gave license to all uncleanness.

“And let every one with pure lips speak that which is propitious, for now will I, according to custom, celebrate with hymns the god Bacchus. Blessed is he who, being favored, knows the mysteries of the gods, keeps his life pure and

his soul initiated into the Bacchic rites, and serves Bacchus, dancing upon the mountains with holy purifications, reverencing the mysteries of the mighty mother Cybele, brandishing the thyrsus, and crowned with ivy!" *

Dionysus frequently met with opposition in his efforts to extend the knowledge and use of the vine. Lycurgus, a Thracian king, was struck blind by Zeus for his rash hostility. Frantic with rage, he slew his own son, mistaking him for a vine. According to another tradition, Ambrosia, in the form of a vine, embraced Lycurgus, and he perished in the deadly grasp. Pentheus, a king of Thebes, opposed the orgiastic ceremonies introduced among the women, and while watching the proceedings was mistaken for an animal by his own mother and her sisters, who, filled with Bacchic fury, seized him, and tore him in pieces. At Orchomenus, the three daughters of Minyas refused to join in the orgies, and were turned into birds. In later times, at the festival of the Agrionia, the priests pursued the women of the race of Minyas, and slew with the sword any whom they could overtake. Even when Dionysus was propitiously received, misfortune came to those who showed him favor. Icarius, a king of Attica, was friendly to him, and was in-

* Euripides, *The Bacchæ*.

structed in the mysteries of wine-making; but revealing the secret to the herdsmen and laborers, they became intoxicated, and slew him, throwing his body into a well, or burying it under a tree. His daughter Erigone, finding the spot, hung herself in grief.

There were many Dionysiac festivals.

“Crowds of females, clothed in fawn-skins, and bearing the sacred thyrsus, flocked to the solitudes of Parnassus or Cithæron or Taygetus, during the consecrated triennial period, passed the night there with torches, and abandoned themselves to demonstrations of frantic excitement, with dancing, and clamorous invocation of the god. The men yielded to a similar impulse, with noisy revels in the streets, sounding the cymbal and tambourine, and carrying the image of the god in procession.”* Worship was thought to be most perfect when accompanied with the most thorough drunkenness.

The active worship of this god extended widely in Asia. In Phrygia he was connected with Cybele, and followed by Pan, Silenus, Satyrs, and Centaurs. The decay of vegetation was represented as Dionysus slain, and with this meaning he was connected with the mysteries of Eleusis. He symbolized also the productiveness

* Grote, *History of Greece*, Vol. I, p. 26.

of nature. His chief symbols, besides the phallus, were the bull, the panther, the ass, and the goat; and his insignia were the ivy-wreath, the thyrsus, the drinking-cup, and sometimes the horn of a bull, which he wore on his forehead. Sometimes his effigy looks out of a bush or low tree. Fruit-growers set up his image in their orchards as a natural tree-stump. The Corinthians made two images out of a particular pine-tree, and gave them red faces and gilt bodies. The image of Dionysus was often nothing more than an upright post, with leafy boughs projecting from the head and body. The only resemblance to the human figure was a bearded mask to represent the head. There were no arms, but the object was draped in a mantle. The religion of Greece suffered greatly from this most degrading and licentious worship.

Hades, "the unseen," was the ruler of the infernal realm. The "house of Hades" was a dark abode, deep down in the earth, and those who would invoke him, rapped on the ground to attract his attention. Another view placed his realm in the far West, beyond the ocean. He was a shadowy deity, little worshiped anywhere. Pluto, the god of wealth, usurped his place to some extent, but he ever maintained his position in poetry. His wife, Proserpine, whom he ab-

ducted from the earth—pure, chaste, and kindly, for one in her unenviable position—was queen of the dead. Her votaries abstained from beans, pomegranates, apples, fish, and domestic fowls.

Hecate was the goddess of magic, and was closely connected with Artemis. Her worship flourished especially among the wild tribes of Samothrace, Thessaly, and elsewhere. She was a moon-goddess, and magic rites were performed by the light of the moon. She lighted wanderers on their way by night, and was the patroness of roads. Pillars, called Hecatæa, stood at cross-roads and door-ways, especially in Athens. Hecate was also the goddess of fertility, wealth, and power. Dogs, honey, and black ewe-lambs were presented to her as offerings. She was represented in triple form, and her six hands held torches, with sometimes a snake, a whip, a dagger, or a key. Dogs were often at her side.

Æolus was the god of the winds, which he confined in a vast cavern, or sent forth at his will.

“Here Æolus, in cavern vast,
With bolt and barrier fetters fast
Rebellious storm and howling blast.
They, with the rock’s reverberant roar,
Chafe, blustering round their prison door;

He, throned on high, the scepter sways,
Controls their moods, their wrath allays.
Break but that scepter, sea and land,
And heaven's ethereal deep,
Before them they would whirl like sand,
And through the void air sweep."*

He dwelt in an Æolian Island, which floated on the sea, and was surrounded by an impregnable brazen wall; and up to this wall ran a smooth rock. He has six daughters, whom he gives in marriage to his six sons. These signify the twelve winds. They always banquet near their dear father and good mother. The sweet-odored dwelling is charmed with musical sounds during the day, but at night all sleep on beds of richest tapestry.

Ulysses during his wanderings visited this god, and was entertained for a month. When at length he asked for permission to depart, the god prepared for him an escort. Having slain an ox nine years old, he gave the much-traveled wanderer the bladder, in which he bound the ways of the blustering winds, that they might not escape and make the voyage one of danger. He bound them in the hollow ship with a shining silver rope, and "not even a little breath might escape." But when his companions, thinking to secure treasures, cut the bag open, the winds es-

* Virgil, The Æneid, Conington's Translation, i, 52-59.

caped, and Ulysses was driven back to the home of Æolus, who, however, spurned him away as one hateful of the gods.

Nereus, the old man of the sea—"men call him old because he is unerring as well as mild; neither doth he forget the laws, but knoweth just and gentle purposes"—trusty and truthful, was friendly to men, and full of wisdom. His fifty daughters, who presented most valuable gifts to men, were called Nereids, and were personifications of the quiet, peaceful, and propitious sea.

Proteus was another god of the sea, full of wisdom and knowledge, which, however, he would not impart save under compulsion. At noonday, while he was sleeping in a cave by the sea, he could be surprised, caught, bound, and forced to answer any questions which the inquirer wished to propose, though he always tried to escape by assuming rapidly, one after the other, a multitude of forms. He was the subject of Poseidon, and shepherded the droves of fish beneath the billows.

Themis was the personification of traditional custom. Homer and others made her a goddess. By command of Zeus, she calls the gods to an assembly, and summons or disperses assemblies of men. She possessed several temples and altars.

III.

NYMPHS AND MONSTERS: PRIESTS AND ORACLES.

THE Greeks peopled all nature — woods, springs, rivers, hills, mountains, meadows, caves, ocean—with nymphs. These strange beings sometimes carried away the souls of men to dwell with them, sometimes formed peaceful unions with men, and sometimes took complete possession of both soul and body. In such cases as the last, the possessed person lost his own wit to be sure, but thereby gained a superior wisdom. Nymphs were worshiped especially by the rural populations upon whom they possessed a strong hold.

The nymphs of rivers and fountains were called Naiads; those of the sea were Nereids and Oceanides; those of the forests, groves, and trees, Dryads and Hamadryads, and those of the mountains, Oreads.

The Muses were originally a variety of nymphs. They were the daughters of Zeus, and presided over the nine principal departments of letters. Upon whomsoever they look at his birth, “on the tongue of such a one they shed a hon-

eyed dew, and from his lips drop gentle words ; so then the peoples all look to him as he decideth questions of law with righteous judgments ; and he speaketh counsels unerringly."

The Oceanides are daughters of Oceanus and Tethys, and are three thousand in number.

" Three thousand nymphs
Of oceanic line, in beauty tread
With ample step, and, far and wide dispersed,
Haunt the green earth and azure depths of lakes,
A blooming race of glorious goddesses."*

The Ocean-nymphs, beholding the misery inflicted on Prometheus by the power of Zeus, their hearts moved to pity at the sight of his awful sufferings, cry the prayer :

" May never the all-ruling
Zeus set his rival power
Against my thoughts;
Nor may I ever fail
The gods, with holy feasts
Of sacrifices, drawing near,
Beside the ceaseless stream
Of father Ocean :
Nor may I err in words;
But this abide with me,
And never fade away."†

Galatea was a sea-nymph, the daughter of Nereus and Doris. Most unsuitably, as so fre-

* Hesiod, *The Theogony*—Elton's Translation, p. 300.

† Æschylus, *Prometheus*, 526-535.

quently happens in Greek story, Polyphemus, the Cyclops, celebrated in Homeric verse, falls in love with the beautiful nymph. His love, however, meets with no return. Galatea overhears from afar the words of the monster beseeching her love. He praises her beauty. She is fairer than the leaf of the snow-white privet, more blooming than the meadows, more slender than the tall alder, brighter than glass, more wanton than the tender kid, smoother than the shells worn by the continual floods, more pleasing than the winter's sun or the summer's shade, more beauteous than the apple, more sightly than the lofty plane-tree, clearer than ice, sweeter than the ripened grape, softer than the down of the swan, and more refreshing than curdled milk. He calls upon her to raise her beauteous head out of the azure sea, and not to refuse his presents.*

In the Homeric hymn to Aphrodite, we have a full description of the Wood-nymphs. Speaking of her son, the goddess says :

“But him, when first he sees the sun's clear light,
The nymphs shall rear, the mountain-haunting nymphs,
Deep-bosomed, who on this mountain great
And holy dwell, who neither goddesses
Nor women are. Their life is long; they eat
Ambrosial food, and with the Deathless frame
The Beauteous dance. With them, in the recess

* Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, cf. Riley's Translation, pp. 471, 472.

Of lovely caves, well-spying Argos-slayer
And the Sileni mix in love. Straight pines,
Or oaks high-headed, spring with them upon
The earth man-feeding, soon as they are born ;
Trees fair and flourishing, on the high hills
Lofty they stand ; the Deathless' sacred grove
Men call them, and with iron never cut.
But when the fate of death is drawing near,
First wither on the earth the beauteous trees,
The bark around them wastes, the branches fall,
And the nymph's soul at the same moment leaves
The sun's fair light."

In the *Argonautics* of Apollonius Rhodius,
Phineus explains the cause of the poverty of
Peræbius :

"But he was paying the penalty laid on
His father's crime ; for one time, cutting trees
Alone among the hills, he spurned the prayer
Of the Hamadryas nymph, who, weeping sore,
With earnest words besought him not to cut
The trunk of an oak-tree, which, with herself
Coeval, had endured for many a year ;
But, in the pride of youth, he foolishly
Cut it ; and to him and to his race the nymph
Gave ever after a lot profitless."

Charon, of Lampsacus, relates that Rhœcus ordered his slaves to prop up an oak which was ready to fall, and thereby saved the life of the nymph. In gratitude she desired him to ask any reward, and she would bestow upon him the wished-for boon. He besought her love, and it

was granted. In the course of time he made a rough reply to her messenger, at which she became so incensed that she deprived him of sight.

Calypso, the beautiful nymph who dwelt in an island, retained Odysseus seven years in her fair abode. The divine messenger from Zeus visited her, and commanded her to release the captive. A large fire was burning on the hearth, and at a distance the smell of cedar and frankincense, which were burning, shed odor through the island. The nymph was singing with beautiful voice while she wove with a golden shuttle.

But a flourishing grove of alder, poplar, and sweet-smelling cypress, had sprung up and surrounded her grot, wherein birds with spreading wings, owls, hawks, and wide-tongued crows—interested in maritime employments—slept. The vine in the strength of its prime grew about the hollow grot, loaded with clusters of grapes. Four fountains of clear water flowed in different directions, and around all were soft meadows of violets and parsley. There was every delight to please the eye, charm the ear, and captivate the heart. Even an immortal, were he to visit this beautiful grot and its surroundings, when he gazed upon its charm, would be filled with delight at the prospect.*

* Homer, *The Odysseus*, v, 59-74.

Calypso, divine one of the goddesses, sat on a shining, brilliant throne, and entertained Hermes with ambrosia and ruby nectar. The gift of immortality was at her disposal. She offered this gift to Odysseus, with the hope of gaining his permanent regard.

Gladstone finds in Homer's nymphs of Ithaca evidences of Phœnician influence. They were the objects of particular popular worship. Ithakos and his brothers constructed their grove and fountain near the city, and from thence the city was supplied with water. Here also was an altar, which received the offerings of those who chanced to pass the spot. Near the landing-place of Odysseus was a cave, sacred to the nymphs, where the hero had formerly worshiped. This landing-place seems to have been named by the Phœnicians, and hence it is supposed that the worship had a Phœnician character. These Ithacan nymphs are water-nymphs. Circe is a Phœnician personage, and her four servants are born of the fountains, groves, and consecrated rivers. The grove included the fountain within. Nymphs were also worshiped in Trinacriê, the island of the sun. This also would suggest an Eastern character.

These nymphs of Ithaca are associated with Hermes. Over the city rises the hill of Hermes.

When the pious Eumaios banqueted on the slaughtered pig, he cut it into seven portions, and gave one of these portions to the nymphs and Hermes. Now Hermes is the son of Maia. Homer affords no direct evidence of her extraction, but all Greek tradition places it within the Phœnician circle. In Scheriê, Hermes was the god to whom was offered the evening libation, and Scheriê is clearly Phœnician. Poseidon seems to have been its presiding deity. Hermes, in the *Odysseus*, replaces Iris as the messenger of the gods. Was this because of her Phœnician character? Iris is distinctively Hellenic, and may have been a creation of Homer. It may also be that, because of his Phœnician character, he became the guide and guardian of *Odysseus* in his eastern wanderings. *Calypso* is a Phœnician personage, and Hermes seems to have been in general communication with this nymph. His office as conductor of the dead supplies additional evidence to the same effect. Such are the several points made by Gladstone in his most excellent article on "Phœnician Affinities of *Ithaca*." *

We are constantly meeting with Phœnician

* Gladstone, *The Nineteenth Century*, August, 1889, pp. 284, 285; cf. *Homer, The Odysseus*, xvii, 304-311; xiii, 103, 347, 349; xiii, 104, *et alibi*; xvii, 240; x, 348-351; xvi, 470; xiv, 435 vii, 136-138; vi, 266; xii, 390.

and other foreign influences in the religion of the Greeks; and in the early religion it is frequently a difficult task to determine how much is imported and how much indigenous. Gladstone is a recognized master in Homeric studies, and, though not always reliable, has done much toward the elucidation of old Greek life and the solution of hard problems.

The nymph Arethusa was changed by Artemis into a fountain, that she might escape the ardent pursuit of the river-god Alpheus, who aspired to her hand. But the god, as the story goes, was not frustrated, but passed beneath the sea from Peloponnesus to the island Ortygia, whither his beloved had taken refuge. Milton, in his "Arcades," alludes to the story:

"That renowned flood, so often sung,
Divine Alpheus, who by sacred sluice
Stole under seas to meet his Arethuse."

The story is celebrated in mythology, and deserves its popularity. Perhaps we can do no better than to let Arethusa relate her own story as she told it to Ceres, as preserved in Ovid:

"I was one of the nymphs which exist in Achaia; nor did any one more eagerly skim along the glades than myself, nor with more industry set the nets. But though the reputation for beauty was never sought by me, although, too,

I was of robust make; still I had the name of being beautiful. But my appearance, when so much commended, did not please me; and I, like a country lass, blushed at those endowments of person in which other females are wont to take a pride, and I deemed it a crime to please. I remember I was returning weary from the Stymphalian wood. The weather was hot, and my toil had redoubled the intense heat. I found a stream gliding on without any eddies, without any noise, and clear to the bottom, through which every pebble, at so great a depth, might be counted, and which you could hardly suppose to be in motion. The hoary willows and poplars, nourished by the water, furnished a shade, spontaneously produced, along the shelving banks."

The nymph, having disrobed, was enjoying a refreshing bath in the cooling waters of the beautiful stream, when the god, moved with passion, sought her love. She fled over fields and mountains, until wearied with the exertion and nearly overtaken, when she cried to Artemis for help. "The goddess was moved, and, taking one of the dense clouds, she threw it over me. The river looked about for me, concealed in the darkness, and, in his ignorance, sought about the encircling cloud; and twice unconsciously did he go around the place where the goddess had con-

cealed me, and twice did he cry, 'Ho, Arethusa!' What, then, were my feelings, in my wretchedness? . . . Yet he does not depart; for no further does he trace any prints of my feet. He watches the cloud and the spot. A cold perspiration takes possession of my limbs, thus besieged, and azure-colored drops distill from all my body. . . . I was changed into a stream. But still the river recognized the waters, the objects of his love; and, having laid aside the shape of a mortal, which he had assumed, he was changed into his waters, that he might mingle with me. Thereupon the Delian goddess cleaved the ground. Sinking, I was carried through dark caverns to Ortygia, which, being dear to me from the surname of my own goddess, was the first to introduce me to the upper air." *

The stories of the loves of the nymphs with gods and men form many charming pictures, though often at the expense of the reputation of both for morality and conjugal fidelity. They were frequently changed into the forms of various objects, both animate and inanimate. They were generally mild in disposition and friendly to men, but it was not well to fall into their power.

* Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, Riley's Translation, Vol. III, pp. 184, 185; cf. Virgil, *Æneid*, 694; Achilles Tatius, I.

The Charites were goddesses, three in number, whose early names were unknown. The chief seat of their worship was Orchomenus. Stones, believed to have fallen from heaven, were their symbols, and were preserved in their temples. Charis is an epithet of "the light-illumined clouds which seem to escort the dawn;" and the goddess Charis was the goddess of early fresh and vigorous life. Like Aphrodite, she resembled Persephone; and, like Hebe, she was often associated with Hera. In later art the Graces, or Charites, are often represented holding ears of corn in their hands. In Sparta and Athens there were two Charites; but generally in Greek mythology they became three in number. Their worship was celebrated with secret rites. They became, in later development, the impersonation of grace and cheerfulness, both in nature and in moral life.

The Erinnyes, or Furies, were the stern avengers of iniquity, whose pity the people tried to win by complimenting them with the name Eumenides, or "merciful beings." They were three in number, and when they acquired names these names meant Hatred, Jealousy, and Revenge.

But we can not speak of the many divinities of the second rank, though it were a pleasant task to recall their characters, adventures, and

worship. We must also omit a multitude of divinities of a still lower rank. They act as attendants upon the great gods. Many others are mere shadowy forms, and little more than personifications of phases, acts, and circumstances in human life, qualities of the mind, attributes of the body, and facts of nature.

Several of the attendants of the gods are beautiful characters, and patterns of grace and fidelity—full of sunshine and good cheer. Iris is the messenger of Zeus. She is called golden-winged and rosy-armed, and often carries the herald's staff. This goddess is the personification of the rainbow, which unites heaven and earth. The Latin poet has retained her Greek character :

“So, down from heaven fair Iris flies,
On saffron wings impearl'd with dew,
That flash against the sunlit skies
Full many a varied hue ;
Then stands at Dido's head, and cries :
‘ This lock to Dis I bear away,
And free you from your load of clay !’
So shears the lock—the vital heats
Disperse, and breath in air retreats.”*

Kratos and Bia are servants of Hephæstus ; and the Horæ, who, with the Charites, work the garments of Aphrodite with flowers which retain

* Virgil, The *Æneid*, iv, 700-705.

the fragrance of nature, are the attendants of this goddess of love.

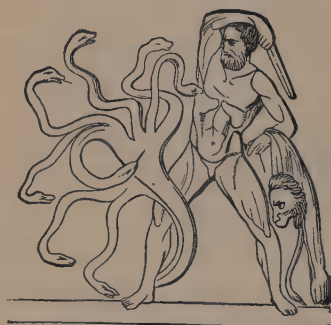
Boreas and the other winds are the servants of Æolus. Boreas, the north wind, is rough and powerful. He carried off Oreithyia, the beautiful daughter of Erechtheus, king of Athens, and made her queen of the winds. They dwelt on Mount Hæmus, in Thrace. He had an altar near Ilissus, and a festival was held in his honor.

Hebe is the cup-bearer of the gods, and, like Aphrodite, is called the most beautiful of the gods. In Phlius she was worshiped in a temple on the citadel to which the right of asylum was attached. She was the personification of the blooming freshness and youth of nature, and again of the eternal youth which belongs to the gods. At the apotheosis of Heracles, when he was reconciled to Hera, he received Hebe as his wife, and they were worshiped together in Athens.

Greek mythology is full of monstrous births—the Cyclopes, the Harpies, the Minotaur, the Gorgons, the Nemean Lion, the Lernæan Hydra, the Dragon of the Hesperides, the Centaurs, Echidna, Chimæra, Cerberus the Dog of Hades, Typhœus, and the like. Classic story has made their names familiar.

Chimæra is a monster “breathing resistless fire, fierce and huge, fleet-footed, as well as strong. This monster had three heads—one indeed of a grim-visaged lion, one of a goat, and another of a serpent—a fierce dragon; in front a lion, a dragon behind, and in the midst a goat—breathing forth the dread strength of burning fire.”

Typhœus is the youngest son of Tartarus and Gæa. “Whose hands, indeed, are apt for



HERACLES SLAYING THE
LERNEAN HYDRA.

deeds on the score of strength, and untiring the feet of the strong god; and from his shoulders there were a hundred heads of a serpent, a fierce dragon, playing with dusky tongues, and from the eyes in his wondrous

heads fire sparkled beneath the brows; whilst from all his heads fire was gleaming, as he looked keenly. In all his terrible heads, too, were voices, sending forth every kind of sound ineffable. For one while, indeed, they would utter sounds so as for the gods to understand; and at another time again the voice of a loud-bellowing bull, untamable in force, and proud in utterance; at another time, again, that of a lion, possessing a



THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR.

daring spirit; at another, yet again, they would sound like to whelps, wondrous to hear; and at another, he would hiss, and the lofty mountains resound. And, in sooth, then would there have been done a deed past remedy, and he, even he, would have reigned over mortals and immortals, unless, I wot, the sire of gods and men had quickly observed him." Zeus conquered Typhœus, and hurled him into wide Tartarus.*

The belief in these monstrous forms—we can not spare our time to describe others—must have exercised a profound influence upon the popular religion. Some may have been loved, some worshiped, many feared, and all respected. They furnished the material from which many stories for the nursery were constructed. Children were frightened into obedience by relating to them stories of bugbears and hobgoblins—*Lamia*, *Gorgo*, *Ephialtes*, *Mormolyca*, *Akko*, *Alphito*, *Empousa*. Superstitious terrors were created and fed by such nonsense.†

The Greeks prayed and offered sacrifices, and in this manner they recognized the blessings received from the heavenly divinities, and besought their continuance. The devoted Greek filled his

* Hesiod, *The Theogony*, pp. 18, 41.

† Becker, *Charicles*, pp. 224, 225; Lucian, *Dialogues of the Gods*, p. 37; Theocritus, *Idyll xv*, 40.

house with shrines, and presented thereon offerings to secure the especial favor and protection of his own peculiar patron deities. He prayed both morning and evening, and did not fail to conclude each meal with a hymn or prayer.

But this family worship did not suffice, except when life was running smoothly. When sickness or danger was felt to be near, there were prayers, sacrifices, and vows to meet the special emergency.

The religious festivals of the Greeks—national, political, tribal, and others—were numerous and important. The perfection of the music, the brilliancy of the processions, the theatrical contests, the magnificent equipages, the splendor and excitement of the scene, and the many races and games, made these festivals attractive and joyous. Sacrifices were offered, and the people feasted on the flesh of the sacrificial victims. The great festivals—the Olympian, the Delphian, the Isthmian, and the Nemean—were expected with eagerness, and celebrated with enthusiasm. The lesser festivals had also their own importance, and all were marked by brightness, cheerfulness, joyousness, feasting and dancing, and general good cheer. This, indeed, was a distinguishing mark of the Greek religion—light, grace, pleasure, gladness.

The gods, however, could be offended, and then visited upon individuals, families, cities, and nations, calamities great and terrible. The Furies were sometimes the agents of the gods in their inflictions of punishment. The crimes most hateful to the gods were blasphemy, sacrilege, perjury, treachery, incest, and others of similar character. Fierce demons were sent to torment



FOOT-RACE, OLYMPIAN FESTIVAL.

the guilty soul, and peace was only possible when, by long and tedious rites, the gods had been propitiated. Some sins seem to have placed the offender beyond the reach of mercy, and human sacrifices were the only possible propitiation for certain national sins.

The general rule, however, was facility in securing pardon. It could not be expected that the people would be better than the gods whom

they worshiped, and it was not difficult to find among the gods crimes similar to their own. The gods, therefore, might be offended at their behavior, but would accept a slight offering as a sufficient satisfaction. This made sin easy.

Besides the personal, household, and public worship—as performed regularly, or in special emergencies, and in connection with the national, tribal, and local festivals—the mysteries occupied a prominent place in the religion of the Greeks. The profound secrecy, the music, the processions, the awful meanings, the unexpected and sudden transitions, the profound symbolism, and the wide popularity, powerfully attracted to these mysteries. They may have taught little theology, but doubtless they held close to the prevailing religious beliefs. Devoted to some chosen god, they symbolized his mythologic life, and in that manner ever commemorated his history. They also symbolized something beyond the popular interpretation of these myths; but how much beyond, and what, can not with certainty, be determined. Their general influence upon the religion can not have been beneficial.

The Greeks, like many heathen nations, were much devoted to religious observances. Paul noticed in Athens an altar to the “Unknown God.” Sometimes the name of the Supreme

God was considered too sacred to be pronounced or written. There might also be a fear lest, in the multiplicity of gods to whom sacrifices were offered, some god might be forgotten. And then, too, it might not be known to what god thanks were due for some special favor.

When the Athenians were afflicted by a plague, and were enjoined by the priestess at Delphi to purify the city, they sent for Epimenides, a Cretan philosopher, especially beloved, as they believed, by the gods. This was in the forty-sixth Olympiad. Coming to the city, he took some black sheep and some white ones, and led them up to the Areopagus. There he set them free, and let them wander about at their pleasure. Attendants followed them, and as often as one after the other lay down, it was sacrificed to the patron deity of the spot. In this manner the deadly plague was stayed. And, says Diogenes Laertius, there may still be found, in the different boroughs, altars without names. These he considers memorials of the propitiation of the gods which then took place.*

We may consider these sheep as scapegoats. In wandering about in the city, they gathered to themselves the plague or plague-spirits, and

* Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers*, p. 51.

bore them each to her own special deity, and there yielded them up with her life.

We may compare another sacrifice. Barley mixed with wheat, or cakes made therefrom, were laid on the altar of Zeus Polieus, on the Acropolis. Oxen were driven around the altar, and the ox which first ate of the offering was thereby designated for the sacrifice. The ax and knife to be used were sanctified by being wet in water brought by certain maidens. The weapons were sharpened and handed to two butchers. One felled the ox with his ax, threw the ax away, and fled. The other cut the throat of the ox with his knife, threw the knife away, and fled. The ox was skinned, and all present joined in a sacrificial meal. The hide was stuffed with straw, and yoked to a plow. A trial was then held to determine who murdered the ox. The maidens charged it upon those who sharpened the weapons; the latter accused those who handed them to the butchers; those who handed the weapons to the butchers blamed the butchers; and the butchers blamed the ax and knife, which were finally found guilty, condemned, and cast into the sea. In this case the ox may have represented the corn-spirit, sacrificed at the end of the harvest to become incarnate, with renewed vigor, with the beginning of the following season.

Paul, in Acts, mentions an altar to the "Unknown God." Pausanius says that at Athens there were altars to gods whose names were unknown. Philostratus bears testimony to the same fact.

"Among the Greeks, as among the Italicans, religion was a matter of personal conscience, and



THE HOMERIC ZEUS.

the full exercise of divine worship a personal right of every freeman. No privileged caste stood between gods and men. Every Hellene may offer sacrifice and prayer without any stranger's medi-

ation. The mission of religion is to accompany every public and domestic action, to sanctify every day, to consecrate every labor and every pleasure. This object is achieved by man's putting himself in communication with the gods. Sacrifices are nothing but the expression of the communion of life between gods and men, which should constantly be renewed. The

sacrificing human being is a guest of the gods, and is thought worthy of sitting at the table of the gods, like Tantalus, the friend of the gods, and like the blameless Æthiopians, whose meal is shared by the Homeric Zeus. And since this friendship of the gods is the fundamental condition of every human blessing, it is also accessible to every member of the people, and every one whose hands are clean may at the altar assure himself anew of his possession of this communion with the gods." *

A particular priesthood was necessary to give permanency and regularity to the worship. Particular families, from long connection with the worship of any deity, would be especially well qualified to administer their worship according to established rules and traditions. There would easily arise a priestly hereditary nobility, who, though not forming a caste, would yet possess great importance and dignity in the eyes of the people. These priestly families would soon become the depositaries of knowledge concerning religious services, and the conservators of ancient ideas and customs. They preserved the purity of the forms of worship, and guarded the inviolability of sacred things, while they supported and strengthened the State in many ways—ter-

* Curtius, History of Greece, Vol. II, p. 3.

rifying evil-doers, cursing enemies in the name of the gods, and solemnly blessing all acts of State worship. Although the power of the priests at times was great, they never asserted themselves as a hierarchy. In fact, they were frequently split up into factions, and this would be a powerful check upon any tendencies dangerous to the State.

The mantic art, in its origin, was not connected with the priesthood. Gods, men, and things were considered, in some sense, one in government. Unusual phenomena in earth, air, or sky were received as divine hints. Those whose hearts were nearest the gods and nature could read these omens. Knowing the divine will, they could demand a hearing, and insist upon obedience. Especially in sacrifices the Greeks looked for divine revelations; and hence everything connected with the offering of sacrifices was subjected to the closest scrutiny, that no admonition or notification of the gods might escape attention. But this low kind of prophecy could not chain the mind of the intellectual and cultured, however mighty might be its influence among the mass of the people.

With the worship of Apollo the mantic art finds its highest development. The god speaks through the mouths of girls and women, whose

own consciousness, in moments of prophetic frenzy, is so lost that they have neither will nor understanding in the words which they pronounce. Their words must be interpreted. Here the mantic art comes into relation with the priestly. Divination, in its best work, was drawn to fixed places and special days. There soon arose influential oracles, consecrated by divine omens and revered associations, and in their administration the priests acquired new power and dignity. These oracles became centers of culture; and the priests were so well versed in national affairs, and so schooled by experience, that the answers they gave to many questions were characterized by much wisdom. Certain questions, beyond the reach of their wisdom, they might refuse to answer as improper; or the answers might be worded in a manner so ambiguous that it would be impossible thereafter to prove them false. Hence the oracles long maintained their influence, and especially the Delphic oracle was a seat of wonderful power. It bound the Hellenes together as a nation, and it bound true worshipers to the will of Zeus, while it insisted upon purity of life. The priests of Delphic Apollo baptized with Castalian water, but warned the candidates: "Deceive not yourselves. For the good, indeed, one drop of the sacred spring

suffices; but from the bad, no sea of water shall wash away the pollution of sin.”*

The several oracles were maintained in harmonious relations with themselves and with all Greece. The sanctuary was the safest place in which to deposit money as well as all kinds of articles of value, and hence became an institution somewhat similar to modern banking establishments. The oracle fostered the beginnings of literature, and exercised a weighty influence over Greek art and architecture. Every colony was sent out and planted under the protection of Apollo, and, in true missionary spirit, carried his worship to many foreign coasts. The oracle was also closely connected with markets, trades, and all commercial enterprise. The calendar was placed under the supervision of the priests, and while the civil year was not forgotten, the sacred year came into general use. Great national festivals worked harmoniously with the oracles in maintaining a national spirit. The Delphic Amphictyony established a definite number of deities, and the priests guarded against the introduction of new gods.

Delphi, in the days of the splendor and greatness of its power, was the spiritual center of all arts, and united them all for religious purposes.

* Curtius, *History of Greece*, Vol. II, p. 27.

“ In honor of the same god the columns rise to bear the tabulature of marble; the courts, as well as the pediments and metopes of the temple, are filled with statuary; and the inner walls of the temples are adorned with woven tapestry, the place of which is afterwards taken by the art of painting. The same divine glory is served by the hymn and the song of victory, by music and the dance. Therefore the Greeks conceived the Muses as a choir, and were unable to represent to themselves the single goddesses as individuals separated from the rest of the assembly; and in Apollo they saw the leader of this choir of the Muses. It was no poetic metaphor for the Greeks, but a religious belief, which they displayed in a grand group of statuary in the front of the temple at Delphi. And thus the Delphic Apollo really stands at the center of all the higher tendencies of scientific inquiry and artistic effects, as the guiding genius of spiritual life, which he, surrounded by the chosen heads of the nations, conducts to a grand and clear expression of its totality, by this means founding an ideal unity of the Greek people.” *

The Greeks did not recognize sin in the Christian sense, though several of the philosophers and poets approximated to the idea. The gods or

* Curtius, *History of Greece*, Vol. II, pp. 100, 101.

fate were considered quite as responsible for sin as man himself. Wrong-doing of every kind was most frequently expressed by *atè* with its corresponding verb. "The radical signification of the word seems to be a befooling—a depriving one of his senses and his reason, as by unseasonable sleep and excess of wine, joined with the influence of evil companions, and the power of destiny or the deity. Hence the Greek imagination, which impersonated every great power, very naturally conceived of *Atè* as a person, a sort of omnipresent and universal cause of folly and sin, of mischief and misery, who, though the daughter of Jupiter, yet once fooled or misled Jupiter himself, and thenceforth, cast down from heaven to earth, walks with light feet over the heads of men, and makes all things go wrong. Hence, too, when men come to their senses, and see what folly and wrong they have perpetrated, they cast the blame on *Atè*, and, so, ultimately, on Jupiter and the gods."*

There was something more than an undertone of sadness in many expressions concerning life. From Homer, onward, the low lamentation may be heard. Sophocles says, mournfully :

"Happiest beyond compare
Never to taste of life ;

* Tyler, *Theology of the Greek Poets*, pp. 174, 175.

Happiest in order next,
Being born, with quickest speed
Thither again to turn
From whence we came."

Simonides says: "Sorrow follows sorrow so quickly that not even the air can penetrate between them."

There is no relief in expectation, in the life to come. Indeed, the future, when held in serious contemplation, is, if possible, worse than the present. "This world alone was real—alone offered true happiness; the other was the gloomy, joyless, lower world. Ulysses, in Homer, sees the dead, as shadows, greedily drink the blood which, for a moment at least, restores to them real life; and Achilles would rather linger upon earth in the lowest station than be a king among the shades." Anacreon sings in sad strains: "My temples are gray, and white my head; beautiful youth is gone. Not much remains of sweet life. Therefore I often sigh, fearing Tartarus, dreadful abyss of Hades. Full of horror is the descent thither, and whoever has once gone down there, never returns." *

Whether life or death were better was perhaps an evenly-balanced question. Those who believed in a future existence, were in fear of

* Uhlhorn, Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism, pp. 72-74.

death. Those who conceived this life to be the all, sought to escape its evils in death.

The writings of the poets teem with appearances of the dead in visible form, to avenge themselves on those who did them ill during life. Much attention was paid to the propitiation of the shades of the departed. It was believed that the ghosts of the dead might be summoned to life to give advice to the living, or to denounce before them the criminal. If the murderer wiped his weapon on the head of the victim, or wore under his arm a piece of flesh from the body of the murdered man, he need fear no injury from the avenging spirit, since his power for evil would thereby be destroyed. When Jason, with the aid of the magic wiles of Medea, murdered her brother Absyrtus, he three times licked up the black blood of the hero, and three times spat it out from his mouth, and in this manner made expiation of the bloody treachery. At a later date the two criminals resorted to Circe, to be purified from the unatoned bloodshed. She slew the young of a sow above their heads, and wetted their hands in its blood, and poured out unnamed libations. Then she burnt upon the hearth a soothing sop of honey, oil, and meal, while she offered up her prayers.*

* Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, iv.



THE CHOICE OF HERACLES.

The use of the ordeal—handling red-hot iron, passing through fire, and so on—was common among the Greeks.*

We gladly record the fact that all the Greeks were not in this case. Many, with the spirit of faith and the purpose of righteousness, took a more cheerful view of life, and saw in the future a brighter prospect. This was illustrated in the choice of Heracles. Some of these elect, with an instinctive faith in the Father-God, trod the common walks of life; others were those rare souls whose names are still great in the world's literature. These, however, only point to oases in the spiritual desert.

Among those who dwelt nearest the heart of God, Socrates was pre-eminent. He lived a pure and noble life; he met death with philosophic, and we might say Christian, composure; and he lives immortal in the works of Plato, his illustrious disciple. We may recall certain choice passages in his death-discourses:

“A man who is good for anything, ought not to calculate the chance of living or dying; he

* Æschylus, *Cheophori*, 32, 136, 315, 333, 479; *Eumenides*, 94, *et seq.*; Euripides, *Hecuba*, i, *et seq.*; Heliodorus, *Ethiopics*, vi, 14; Sophocles, *Electra*, 443-446; *Antigone*, 264-266; Tibullus, i, 2, 23; Maximus Tyrius, xiv, 2; Plato, *Laws*, x; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, ii; Plutarch, *Those Who are Punished by the Deity* Late, 17, 22.

ought only to consider whether, in doing anything, he is doing right or wrong—acting the part of a good man or of a bad.” “The difficulty, my friends, is not in avoiding death, but in avoiding unrighteousness; for that runs faster than death.” “Wherefore, O judges, be of good cheer about death, and know this of a truth—that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. He and his are not neglected by the gods; nor has my own approaching end happened by mere chance. But I see clearly that to die and be released was better for me; and therefore the oracle gave no sign. For which reason, also, I am not angry with my accusers or my condemners; they have done me no harm, although neither of them meant to do me any good; and for this I may gently blame them. . . . The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die, and you to live. Which is better, God only knows.” “I am confident in the belief that there truly is such a thing as living again, and that the living spring from the dead, and that the souls of the dead are in existence, and that the good souls have a better portion than the evil.” “O Simmias, how strange that is! I am not very likely to persuade other men that I do not regard my present situation as a misfortune, if I am unable

to persuade you, and you will keep fancying that I am at all more troubled now than at any other time. Will you not allow that I have as much of the spirit of prophecy in me as the swans? For they, when they perceive that they must die, having sung all their life long, do then sing more than ever, rejoicing in the thought that they are about to go away to the gods whose ministers they are. . . . And I too, believing myself to be the consecrated servant of the same God, and the fellow-servant of the swans, and thinking that I have received from my Master gifts of prophecy which are not inferior to theirs, would not go out of life less merrily than the swans." Crito asked how he would be buried. Socrates replied: "In any way that you like; only you must get hold of me, and take care that I do not walk away from you." Then he turned to the other friends who were with him in his last hour, and added, with a smile: "I can not make Crito believe that I am the same Socrates who have been talking and conducting the argument; he fancies that I am the other Socrates whom he will soon see a dead body, and he asks, How shall he bury me? And though I have spoken many words in the endeavor to show that, when I have drunk the poison, I shall leave you, and go to the joys

of the blessed—these words of mine, with which I comforted you and myself, have had, as I perceive, no effect upon Crito. And therefore I want you to be surety for me now, as he was surety for me at the trial; but let the promise be of another sort—for he was my surety to the judges that I would remain; but you must be my surety to him that I shall not remain, but go away and depart; and then he will suffer less at my death, and not be grieved when he sees my body being burned or buried. I would not have him sorrow at my hard lot, or say at the burial, Thus we lay out Socrates; or, Thus we follow him to the grave or bury him; for false words are not only evil in themselves, but they infect the soul with evil. Be of good cheer then, my dear Crito, and say that you are burying my body only, and do with that as is usual, and as you think best.” *

* Plato, Jowett's Translation, Vol. I, pp. 326, 336, 338, 339, 399, 413, 414, 449.

II.

The Religion of the Etruscans

THE RELIGION OF THE ETRUSCANS.

THE Etruscans left no literature, yet there are brief notices of their religion in the works of classic authors, and abundant illustrations in the remains of native works of art. These must, at the present at least, be our chief sources of information with respect to their worship. There are also numerous Etruscan sepulchral inscriptions; but the language is still insoluble; and even were it otherwise, legends so brief would possess but little value. Relying, then, on the reports of foreign authors who wrote long after the Etruscans had ceased to exist as a nation, and had been subjected to foreign rule, and long after their religion had been modified by the pressure and introduction of alien and sometimes hostile elements, we must rest satisfied with general and imperfect results.

The Etruscans were intensely religious. "With Etruria, religion was an all-pervading principle, the very atmosphere of her existence, a leaven operating on the entire mass of society, a constant pressure ever felt in one form or other—a form admitting no rival, all-ruling, all-regulating, all-requiring."

Livy calls the Etruscans "a race which, inasmuch as it excelled in the art of religious observances, was more devoted to them than any other nation." Arnobius says that Etruria was "the creator and parent of superstition." The very name of the nation, *Tusci*, is derived by some authorities from *thuein*, "to sacrifice," and especially "to make offerings to the gods." The Etruscans were celebrated for the zeal and scrupulous care with which they practiced the various observances of its rites and ceremonies.*

Besides angels and demons, there were three general classes of divinities: the deities of heaven, the deities of earth, and the deities of the under-world. Archæological research is still making revelations of new forms of gods and spirits; but of not a few of these we know not even the names.

Tina was the chief of the heavenly gods, and wielded the thunder-bolt. He was the god of the sky, and may have been originally the heaven itself—like the Chinese Tien, with whom in name also he bears a resemblance. He was "the center of the Etruscan god-world, the power who speaks in the thunder and descends in the lightning." To this bright god a temple was

* Rawlinson, *The Religions of the Ancient World*, pp. 160, 161.

dedicated in every city, and one of the gates of each city bore his name. An Etruscan family name and the name of a streamlet were derived from this god. He sometimes received the title *Summanus*, "the supreme god." *

Cupra was a heavenly goddess to whom a temple and a gate were dedicated in every Etruscan city. She has been identified with *Hera* and *Juno*.† The name has been compared with the *Cybele* of *Phrygia*. *Cupra* "expresses the character of *Juno*, as presiding over contracts and obligations of every description involving good faith among mankind, and especially that of marriage." ‡

Thalna, or *Thana*, is thought to be the same goddess. If she be but a mere variant of *Tina*, she may be the reflex of the sky-god. Possibly she may be regarded as the personification of light or day. She is represented on Etruscan mirrors as assisting at the birth of certain divinities, or as an attendant of *Latona*. She has "a coronet, earrings, necklace, and tunic, a fillet or twig in her hand, and a green branch before her

* Taylor, *Etruscan Researches*, p. 132; Rawlinson, *The Religions of the Ancient World*, pp. 161, 162; Dennis, *Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*, Vol. II, p. 444.

† Strabo, Vol. I, p. 357.

‡ Crawford and Balcarras, *Etruscan Inscriptions*, p. 251.

face. . . . On a mirror from Vulci, Thalna appears as a male god, half nude, with a coronet and staff." The name is found in composition in Thankvilus or Tanaquil.

Altria, who may be compared with the Greek Graces, was represented as a nude and beautiful woman, with a crown and necklace, and generally in company with Thalna and Euturpa.*

Menrva had her own temple and gate in each Etruscan city. The name is of very frequent occurrence on works of art. We can, however, gather very little information whereby to judge of her character. According to Taylor, Menrva denotes the "red heaven," or "the dawn," and the two Menrvas, which occasionally appear on the same mirror, denote the morning and the evening twilight.† She is represented armed, with the ægis on her breast, and sometimes with wings. On one mirror she is vanquishing the giant Akrathe. "The goddess, who is armed with helmet, ægis, and spear, has just cut or broken off, it is not clear which, the giant's right arm close to the shoulder; and, grasping it by the wrist, she brandishes it over his head, accompanying the action with a sardonic grin at her foe, who, sinking to his knees, looks up at

* Cooper, *Archaic Dictionary*, pp. 31, 567.

† Taylor, *Etruscan Researches*, pp. 137, 138.

her with an expression rather of astonishment at her cleverness than of pain or terror.”*

Usil, the sun, has been identified with Apollo, and was represented by the native artists as a youth with bow and arrows. According to Festus, *ansel* was a Sabine word, meaning “the sun,” and according to Hesychius the Etruscan word *ansel* meant “the dawn.” The name is found on a bronze mirror from Vulci, in connection with Thesan and Nethuns. Usil wore laced sandals, and was crowned with the rays of the sun.

Losna, the moon, was represented nearly as the Roman Diana. The crescent was her emblem, and her figure is found on a mirror from Præneste. She may be Luna in the character of Lucina.†

We leave the heavenly deities, and come to the consideration of those whose realm was the earth.

Sethlans—the Greek Hephaestus and the Roman Vulcan—was the god of fire. Nethuns, who may be considered the Neptune of the classics, was represented wearing a crown and carrying a trident. Phuphlans, the god of the earth and its products, may be compared with

* Dennis, Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria, Vol. II, p. 429.

† Taylor, Etruscan Researches, pp. 142, 143, 289.

Dionysus and Bacchus. "Phulans was the special deity of Popluna, or (as the Romans called it) Populonia. He seems to have been called also Vortumnus, or Voltumnus, and in this aspect he had a female counterpart, Voltumna, whose temple was the place of meeting where the princes of Etruria discussed the affairs of the confederation." *

Turan was the Greek Aphrodité and the Roman Venus. There was also a male Turan, who was a youthful god, accompanied by a warrior, Avun by name, armed with a spear. Thesan seems to have been in nature like the Greek Eôs and the Roman Aurora. Turms—Hermes, Mercury—was the god of boundaries and the messenger of the underworld. The native name is thought to have been Camillus, or Kamil. According to Servius, the Etruscan name of youthful priestesses was *camillæ*, and the attendant minister of the Flamen Dialis at the sacrifices was called Camillus.†

The goddess Zirna is represented on Etruscan works of art as sitting at the side of Turan and Adonis, with a pencil and box of cosmetics, and a half-moon hanging from her neck. Munthukh

* Rawlinson, *The Religions of the Ancient World*, p. 164.

† Rawlinson, *The Religions of the Ancient World*, p. 165; Taylor, *Etruscan Researches*, p. 150.

is similarly represented, but wears also a necklace. She seems to have been a goddess of health. Sometimes she carried a dove on her right arm.

Alpanu is "an Etruscan goddess, with coronet, earrings, tunic, and mantle, and a star behind her head, who is represented on one mirror as embracing the goddess Akhuvitr, on another as embracing the goddess Thaur, and on a third as attracting the love of a youth called Famu;" while Akhate, "an old, bald-headed man, in a cloak," warns Famu against her blandishments. Tipanu and Sipna were attending goddesses, each with a mirror in her hand.

Uni was a goddess who assisted at the birth of Athene from the head of Zeus, and she was present when Hephaistos chained Here. Lalan, or Laran, was a youthful war-god. With him compare Greek Ares, who was represented with cloak, buskins, helmet, spear, sword, and shield.

Faün may be compared with Orpheus. He is seated on a rock, wears a necklace and a laurel crown, and plays on a lyre; while a female, Rutupis by name, with tunic, mantle, and crown, is at his side.

Asera is a goddess, armed with a hatchet. Suetonius says that Arsar means "a god."

The nine great gods, or *Dii Novensiles*, pos-

sessed the power of hurling the thunder-bolt, and were held in high honor. The *Dii Complices* and the *Dii Consentes* were general names of the twelve principal gods of Etruria and the counselors of Tina. The *Dii Involute* were the fates who ruled both gods and men.

Other names are found in Etruscan mythology; but so little is known concerning their natures and attributes that they may be neglected in this account.

“But it was in the unseen world beneath the earth, the place to which men went after death, and where the souls of their ancestors resided, that the Etruscans devoted the chief portion of their religious thoughts; and with this were connected the bulk of their religious observances. Over the dark realm of the dead ruled Mantus and Mania, king and queen of Hades, the former represented as an old man, wearing a crown, and with wings on his shoulders, and bearing in his hands sometimes a torch, sometimes two or three large nails, which are thought to indicate ‘the inevitable character of his decrees.’ Intimately connected with these deities—their prime minister and most active agent, cruel, hideous, half human, half animal, the chief figure in almost all the representations of the lower world—is the demon Charun, in name no doubt identical with

the Stygian ferryman of the Greeks, but in character so different that it has even been maintained that there is no analogy between them. Charun is 'generally represented as a squalid and hideous old man, with flaming eyes and savage aspect; but he has, moreover, the ears and often the tusks of a brute,' with (sometimes) 'negro features and complexion, and frequently wings,' so that he 'answers well, cloven feet excepted, to the modern conception of the devil.' His brow is sometimes bound round by snakes; at other times he has a snake twisted round his arm; and he bears in his hands almost universally a huge mallet or hammer, upraised as if he were about to deal a death-stroke. When death is being inflicted by man, he stands by, 'grinning with savage delight;' when it comes naturally, he is almost as well pleased. He holds the horse on which the departed soul is to take its journey to the other world, bids the spirit mount, leads away the horse by the bridle or drives it before him, and thus conducts the deceased into the grim kingdom of the dead. In that kingdom he is one of the tormentors of guilty souls, whom he strikes with his mallet or with a sword, while they kneel before him and implore his mercy. Various attendant demons and furies—some male, some female—seem to

act under his orders, and inflict such tortures as he is pleased to prescribe."*

Instead of hands Charun has sometimes lion's paws. He is depicted of a livid hue, like the demon Eurynomos, who devoured the flesh of the dead. Sometimes the sword takes the place of the mallet, or a rudder or an oar, which would suggest the Greek Charon; or a forked stick, like the *caduceus* of Mercury; or a torch or snakes; and sometimes the mallet and the sword are found together. When eyes are represented in the wings of Charun, this may intimate superhuman power and intelligence. The mallet, in one instance, is decorated with a fillet; in another it is encircled by a serpent. We meet with Charun represented with an eagle's bill for a nose. His wings are open, gray above and blue, black, and red on the pinions; while his dress is a white tunic, with a red girdle and a yellow spotted band crossed over his bosom. In the same representation a huge crested and bearded snake springs from his right shoulder, and a sort of halo surmounts his head.†

* Rawlinson, *The Religions of the Ancient World*, pp. 165-167; Dennis, *Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*, Vol. I, pp. 287, 288, 342.

† Dennis, *Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*, Vol. I, p. 348. Vol. II, pp. 191-193.

Kulnu, the god of the grave, is represented bearing in one hand the flaming torch, and in the other the emblematic shears. Vanth was the angel of death, and has a cap and wings, and bears a huge key wherewith to open the tombs of the departed. Nathuns, an avenging fury, whose snake-like hair stands on end, and whose tusk-like fangs protrude from his mouth, bears a serpent in either hand. Tukhulkha has the ears of an ass, the beak of an enormous eagle, which serves at once for nose and mouth, and two hissing snakes bound round his brows and mingling with his shaggy locks. He seizes his victims by the neck, or brandishes huge serpents over their heads. "His open wings have a snake-like border, and the very feathers have caught the hue of a serpent's skin." Turmukas was one of the messengers of Hades. Phipeke was a lion-headed monster; an upturned urn is represented beneath him, and water pours from his mouth. He engaged in combat with Herakles. If not the Hydra, he was perhaps a water-imp.

The Typhon, represented in the Grotto Del Tifone, was a horrid being. "The attitude of the body; the outspread wings; the dark, massy coils of the serpent-limbs; the wild twisting of the serpent locks; the countenance uplifted with an expression of unutterable woe, as he supports

the cornice with his hands,—make this figure imposing, mysterious, sublime.” *

In one representation “Aita,” or Hades, sits on his throne, the upper part of his body bare, but the lower part covered with brown drapery; his flesh deep red; his beard black, grand, and gloomy; his left hand holding aloft a snake; his right hand extended as if giving orders to the triple-headed warrior who stands in front, armed with shield and spear. His wife sits by his side, and is wrapped in white drapery; a deep fringe is thrown over her shoulders, and her head is bound about with green snakes.

There are certain mythological figures which we may consider the representations of marine deities. They are generally in the form of women from the middle upwards, but with fishes’ tails instead of legs. A few are male. Their general character is that of winged creatures, with smaller wings springing from their temples. The wings may symbolize power and intelligence, with swiftness of thought and action. Sometimes a pair of snakes are knotted around their brows, uprearing their crests as in Egyptian gods and kings. They bear a trident or an anchor, a rudder or an oar, a sword or firebrand, or mass of rock. These symbolize their power not only on the ocean, but

* Dennis, *Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*, Vol. I, p. 330.

also on the land. They brandish their weapons over the heads of their victims. Often they have tongues of snakes about their necks. Some of these marine deities or demons are stupendous monsters,

“Horrible, hideous, and of hellish race.”

Etruscan art, especially in the tombs, fairly luxuriates in these monster forms.

Lasa was a deity of another character. He may be considered the beneficent guardian deity of departed souls. His equipment is consistent with his office. He is represented with wings, cap, earrings, necklace, and buskins ; and carries in his hands paper, an inkhorn, and a stylus. Mean was a beneficent goddess. She has a coronet, earrings, and wings ; and she sometimes carries two palm-branches in her hand. These divinities record the destinies of men. Dennis calls them “mild, and decreeing fates.”

When a man dies, his spirit, all robed in spotless white, proceeding on foot, or sitting in a car, or mounted on a horse, and attended by a slave who carries a sack or vase of provisions, takes its long journey to the unseen and unknown world. The good man is peaceful and resigned, but the bad man is full of horror and dismay. Good spirits, who are represented as of red color, and wicked, black spirits, contend for the pos-

session of the soul. The evil spirits add a new horror to their appearance by wreathing their heads with serpents.

The Etruscans believed that every human being had a protecting genius, who was his constant companion, guard, and guide, both in the present world and in the realm of immortality. The Lemures were the spirits of the dead. The Lares were the spirits of virtuous ancestors who presided over the hearths and homes of their children. The Lar Familiaris was the lord of the whole family. The Larvæ were the spirits of wicked ancestors, and are banished from the domestic hearth. The Manes were the souls of the departed. The word is frequently used as synonymous with Lares, and is "connected likewise in tradition with the lower world, and with the moon, the souls of men being supposed to have emanated from that planet."*

The genii of the Romans were the offspring of the great gods, and the givers of life itself, and hence they were called Dii Genitales. These genii received worship among the Romans, as among the Etruscans. The majority of the Etruscan genii were females, and are sometimes called *geniæ*. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish them from Fates or Furies. They have many

* Crawford and Baccarras, Etruscan Inscriptions, p. 261.

of the same characteristics. All have wings, high buskins (often with long flaps), a short, high-girt tunic, and a double strap crossing the bosom. The emblems which they carry reveal their nature. Fates and Furies carry hammer, sword, snake, torch, and shears; the mild Fates have in their hands scroll, inkhorn, stylus, and sometimes hammer and nail; the Genii bear a simple wand or nothing.

The nail symbolizes a fixed decree of fate. Nortia is the Fortune of Etruscan mythology, and had a shrine at Volsinii. She is also mentioned on a votive tablet as the goddess of this city. Her temple was a sort of national calendar; for a nail was driven into it every year, as into the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol of Rome. In one representation, the winged fate *Athropa* or *Atropos*—the *Nortia* of the Etruscans with a Greek name—is about to drive a nail to indicate the predetermined death of *Meleager* and of *Adonis*. Horace presents a picture of *Necessity*, the companion of *Fortune*, bearing such nails in her hand, and he calls them *adamantine*.*

The goddess probably had a temple also at *Ferentinum*.

Horta, an Etruscan goddess, equivalent to the Roman *Salus*, is to be distinguished from *Nortia*.

* Horace, *Carmina*, i, 35, 17; iii, 24, 5.

Plutarch says that the temple of Horta was always kept open.*

Gerhard connects Nortia closely with Minerva. The nail was driven in the right side of the temple of Jupiter, where the temple of Minerva is, "because number is the invention of that goddess."† Pauli has shown that Nurtia became "the goddess Ten, Latin Decuma, Decima, as connected with the tenth month of the Etruscan year.‡

The Etruscans had neither priests nor prophets, properly so called, but rather what may be considered as no more than mere shamans—augurers, sorcerers and necromancers, haruspices and fulgurators, all mere "medicine men"—who, by noting the flight of birds, the entrails of animals, the path of the lightning, and other signs, interpreted the utterances of the spirits of nature and the souls of the dead. This low and barbarous priesthood was "an all-dominating hierarchy, which assumed to be a theocracy, and maintained its sway by arrogating to itself an intimate acquaintance with the will of Heaven and the decrees of fate."||

* Tacitus, *Annals*, xv, 53; Plutarch, *Quæstiones Romanæ*, xlv.

† Livy, vii, 3.

‡ The Academy, No. 875, p. 97c.

|| Dennis, *Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*, Vol. I, Introduction, p. xlii.

These priests were neither expounders of truth nor teachers of righteousness.

“Men were taught to observe the signs in the sky, and the appearance and flight of birds, the sounds which they uttered, their position at the time, and various other particulars. They were bidden to note whatever came in their way that seemed to them unusual or abnormal, and to report all to the priests, who thereupon pronounced an inevitable doom or prescribed a mode whereby the doom might be postponed or averted. Sometimes the signs reported were declared to affect merely individuals; but frequently the word went forth that danger was portended to the State, and then it was for the priesthood to determine at once the nature and extent of the danger, and also the measures to be adopted under the circumstances.

Sacrifices on a vast scale or of an unusual character were commonly commanded in such cases, even human victims being occasionally offered to the infernal deities Mantus and Mania, whose wrath it was impossible to appease in any less fearful way. Certain books, in the possession of the hierarchy, ascribed to a half divine, half human personage, named Tages, and handed down from a remote antiquity, contained the system of divination which the priests followed,

and guided them in their expositions and requirements." *

Tages, according to classic authors, was the son of Genius and the grandson of Jupiter. A Tuscan plowman discovered him in the form of a clod. "His name is not found in the inscriptions; but he is represented on two gems as a boy, half plowed up from the earth, teaching the Etruscan priests." †

Clemens of Alexandria says that the Carians were the first who divined from the stars, the Phrygians from the flight of birds, and the Etruscans by aurspicy. The Etruscans were especially distinguished for divination by lightning, and in this art were said to have excelled all other nations. Cicero, an acknowledged authority on the subject of soothsaying, had great confidence in their skill. Joannes Lydus, in his work "*De Ostentis*," on the authority of Nigidius Figulus, gives an Etruscan "*Thunder Calendar*" for every day in the year. This, he says, was taken from the books of Tages. Servius mentions Etruscan books on lightning. They gave their system of divination to the Romans—

* Rawlinson, *The Religions of the Ancient World*, pp. 170, 171.

† Dennis, *Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*, Vol. I, pp. 418, 419; Cooper, *Archaic Dictionary*, p. 547.

a system practiced by the latter nation even down to the fifth century.

There are many theories concerning the origin and affinities of the Etruscans. Though scholars have looked in every direction and questioned almost every language, no theory which has been proposed is entirely satisfactory. Both tradition and the monuments point, with a goodly degree of confidence, to that group of nations of which the Lydians, Carians, and Lycians in Asia Minor are perhaps the best representatives. The Etruscans, and the Turanian races generally, were emphatically a tomb-building people.

“These cities of the dead are constructed on the precise model of the cities of the living. The tombs themselves are exact imitations of the house. There is usually an outer vestibule, apparently appropriated to the annual funeral feast. From this a passage leads to a large central chamber, which is lighted by windows cut through the rock. This central hall is surrounded by smaller chambers, in which the dead repose. On the roof we see, carved in stone, the broad beam, or roof-tree, with rafters, imitated in relief, on either side, and even imitations of the tiles. These chambers contain the corpses, and are furnished with all the implements, ornaments, and utensils used in life. The tombs are, in fact,

places for the dead to live in. The position and surroundings of the deceased are made to approximate, as closely as possible, to the conditions of life. The couches on which the corpses repose have a triclinal arrangement, and are furnished with cushions carved in stone; and imitations of easy chairs and footstools are carefully hewn out of the rock. Everything, in short, is arranged as if the dead were reclining at a banquet in their accustomed dwellings. On the floor stand wine-jars, and the most precious belongings of the deceased—arms, ornaments, and mirrors—hang from the roof, or are suspended on the walls. The walls themselves are richly decorated, usually being painted with representations of festive scenes. We see figures in gaily embroidered garments reclining on couches, while attendants replenish the goblets or beat time to the music of the pipers. Nothing is omitted which can conduce to the amusement or comfort of the deceased. Their spirits were evidently believed to inhabit these house-tombs after death, just as in life they inhabited their houses.” *

In these tombs—the real temples of the Etruscans—the whole family assembled, at their annual religious feast, to worship the Lares and

* Taylor, *Etruscan Researches*, pp. 46, 48.

Manes of their ancestors, make suitable offerings to their spirits, and perform other most sacred rites. Here successive generations of the dead were entertained by the pious care of the living. The offerings consisted of cups, dishes, portrait-statues, lamps, vases, mirrors, armor, gems, seals, and jewelry, and were presented to the departed, whose spirits could be conciliated, and whose assistance and protection could be secured. "To celebrate the great event, to us so solemn, by feasting and joviality, was not with them unbecoming. They knew not how to conceive or represent a glorified existence otherwise than by scenes of the highest sensual enjoyment."*

The explorer from whom we have been quoting relates with enthusiasm his first impressions upon entering an Etruscan tomb. It was the Grotta Volunna: "I shall always remember it as the first Etruscan tomb I entered. It was soon after its discovery that I found myself at the mouth of this sepulcher. Never shall I forget the anticipation of delight with which I leaped from the *vettura* into the fierce canicular sun, with what impatience I awaited the arrival of the keys, with what strange awe I entered the dark cavern, gazed on the inexplicable char-

* Dennis, Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria, Vol. I, pp. 208, 238, 241, 322.

acters in the doorway, descried the urns dimly through the gloom, beheld the family party at their sepulchral revels, the solemn dreariness of the surrounding cells. The figures on the walls and ceilings strangely stirred my fancy. The Furies, with their glaring eyes, gnashing teeth, and gastly grins; the snakes, with which the walls seemed alive, hissing and darting their tongues at me; and, above all, the solitary wing, chilled me with an undefinable awe, with a sense of something mysterious and terrible. The sepulcher itself, so neatly hewn and decorated, yet so gloomy; fashioned like a house, yet with no mortal inhabitant,—all was so strange, so novel. It was like enchantment, not reality; or, rather, it was the realization of the pictures of subterranean palaces and spell-bound men, which youthful fancy had drawn from the Arabian Nights, but which had long been cast aside into the lumber-room of the memory, now to be suddenly restored.”*

The furniture of the sepulchral houses—in a few cases they represent temples—is such as is adapted to funeral banquets and games. There are also articles to be used by the soul in the other world. Sometimes a piece of money was placed in the mouth of the deceased, that he

*Dennis, *Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*, Vol. II, p. 449.

might have something wherewith to pay the expenses of the journey to the realm of the shades. The paintings represent feasts and games, such as were held on funeral occasions, or such as would symbolize the happy life of the dead. Cinerary urns and sarcophagi show that both burning and burial were practiced in different Etruscan cities and in different ages, but sometimes also in the same age and city. Arms and armor have been found as they were worn by these old warriors, whose dust alone tells the tale of their mortality. Representations of lions and panthers are frequent, and may symbolize the guardians of the tomb. The meaning of the centaurs, hippogriffs, hippocamps, and other objects of monstrous form, has not been determined. Common domestic animals probably only serve to set off the scene and render it more life-like. Snakes are very abundant in the works of Etruscan artists. They rise from the feet, spring out from the loins, twine about the arms, and crown the head. They cling to the spear and mallet, and are carried as scourges by horrid furies. The symbolic eye is also of frequent occurrence on wings and vases.

The eye is a symbol found in use among many nations. We have spoken elsewhere of its occurrence on wings. It is found also very fre-

quently on vases—not only on those of Greek origin, but also on others which are certainly purely Etruscan. Dennis suggests three explanations: It may mark objects and scenes as Bacchic in their import. It may be a charm against the evil eye. The Gorgonion was believed to possess the power of averting evil. These eyes may be Gorgons; sometimes the features of a face are represented. Again, vases bear a resemblance to boats. Several names of goblets and certain names of boats are the same. Heracles crossed the sea to Spain in a goblet. Eyes are placed on the prows of boats, either from a fancied analogy with fish or to intimate the watchfulness necessary to the good pilot.

Various compound beings may have symbolized the double life of the soul—the life which now is and that which is to come. All the symbols of Etruscan art may have been originally full of meaning, but at present we can only conjecture as to their mysterious and awful import. Future study will, in some measure at least, disclose their meaning.

Mommsen sums up the character of the religion of the Etruscans as follows: “The religion of the Tuscans in particular presenting a gloomy fantastic character, and delighting in the mystical handling of numbers in wild and horrible specu-

lations and practices, is equally remote from the clear rationalism of the Romans, and the genial image-worship of the Hellenes. . . . Their prevailing characteristics are a gloomy and withal tiresome mysticism, ringing the changes on numbers, soothsaying, and that solemn enthroning of pure absurdity which at all times finds its own circle of devotees. . . . This worship was cruel, including in particular the sacrifice of their captives; thus, at Cære they slaughtered the Phocæan, and at Tarquinii, the Roman prisoners. Instead of a tranquil world of departed "good spirits," ruling peacefully in the realms beneath, such as the Latins had conceived, the Etruscan religion presented a veritable hell, in which the poor souls were doomed to be tortured by mallets and serpents, and to which they were conveyed by the conductor of the dead, a savage, semi-brutal old man, with wings and a large hammer—a figure which afterwards served in the gladiatorial games at Rome as a model for the costume of the man who removed the corpses of the slain from the arena. . . . The Etruscan religion occupied a higher level than the Roman, in so far as it developed at least the rudiments of what was wholly wanting among the Romans—speculation veiled under the forms of religion. Over the world and its gods there ruled the veiled gods

(*Dii Involute*), consulted by the Etruscan Jupiter himself; that world moreover was finite, and, as it had come into being, so was it again to pass away after the expiry of a definite period of time, whose sections were the *sæcula*. Respecting the intellectual value which may once have belonged to this Etruscan cosmogony and philosophy, it is difficult to form a judgment; they appear, however, to have been from the very first characterized by a dull fatalism and an insipid play upon numbers.”*

That the Romans borrowed much from the religion of the Etruscans we can not doubt; but how much, it is not easy to determine. That the Etruscans in return received contributions from Rome is equally certain.

* Mommsen, History of Rome, Vol. I, pp. 166, 243-245.

III.

The Religion of the Romans.

I.

THE GREAT GODS.

THE religion of the Romans, unlike that of the Greeks, has been called a religion of reflection, and not of contemplation. It exalted the idea rather than the person, and was controlled by a stern necessity. The Roman adored the spiritual and the universal. There was in the spiritual domain a counterpart to every natural phenomenon. To every existing thing there was assigned a spirit which came into being with it, and with its departure perished. "In occupations the very steps of the process were spiritualized; thus, for example, in the prayer for the husbandman there was invoked the spirit of fallowing, of plowing, of furrowing, sowing, covering-in, harrowing, and so forth, down to the in-bringing, up-storing, and opening of the granaries. In like manner, marriage, birth, and every other natural event, were endowed with a sacred life. The larger the sphere embraced in the abstraction, the higher rose the god and the reverence paid by man." The Roman gods, unseen and spiritual, gained a powerful hold on the mind, which is felt even in modern times in survivals in architecture, superstition, and tale.

“The state and the clan, the individual phenomena of nature as well as the individual operations of mind, every man, every place and object, every act, even falling within the sphere of Roman law, reappeared in the Roman world of gods; and, as earthly things come and go in perpetual flux, the circle of the gods underwent a corresponding fluctuation. The tutelary spirit, which presided over the individual act, lasted no longer than that act itself; the tutelary spirit of the individual man lived and died with the man; and eternal duration belonged to divinities of this sort only in so far as similar acts and similar constituted men, and therefore spirits of a similar kind, were ever coming into existence afresh.” *

There is a divinity for every stage of human life. Consevius presides over generation, Fluviona promotes the growth of the embryo, Vitumnus awakens life, and Sentinus gives sensation. Ops—assisted by Candelifera, Postverta and Prosa (the two Carmentæ), Lucina, Partula, Nona, Decima, and Alemona, each having her own office—brings the new soul into the light of day. And now it is necessary that the mother should be guarded against the power of the god Silvanus. This is effectually done by the deities Intercidona, Pilumnus, and Diverra, who surround the house,

* Mommsen, *History of Rome*, Vol. I, pp. 53, 218.

and leave the marks of their callings. If, in addition to these precautions, the god Forculus guards the door, the god Limentinus the threshold, and the goddess Cardea the hinges, we may consider the inmates comparatively safe. Now the goddess Rumina helps the child to take its first food, while Patina and Edula assist in its nourishment in a more general way. Cunina is the goddess of the cradle. Statina, or Statilinus, presides over the babe when it learns to stand, and Levana when it falls. Adeona helps it come to its mother, and Abeona watches over it when it toddles away from maternal arms. Paventia, or Paventina, fills with childish fear; and Vaticanus is the god of the crying infant. The gods Farinus and Locutius inspire with speech.

Then, we have a multitude of gods who belong to early manhood. Venilia inspires with hope; Agenor, or Agenoria, with action; Peragenor with perseverance in action; Stimula furnishes intellectual and physical stimulus; Strenia makes strenuous; Numeria teaches numbers; Camœna teaches song; Consus gives good advice; Sentia helps to frame sentences; Juvenas, or Juventa, presides over the youth; Murcia moves to excess; Quies makes quiet; Fessonia is the goddess of weariness; and Pellonia drives away enemies.

Another group of divinities preside over fam-

ily life. Volupia is the goddess of pleasure, and Præstitia of beauty, while Afferenda attends to fixing the dower. Domiducus leads in the bride, Domitius protects her in the house, and the Manturnæ keep her for her husband. Jugatinus is the god of marriage. Mens gives a good mind; and Volumnus, Volumna, or Voleta, a good will. The goddess Fructesca secures fruitfulness. Then we have a host of gods and goddesses connected with the bridal chamber—Venus, Virginiensis, Mutunus, Tutunus, Priapus, Pertunda, Subigus, Prema, and Perfica! Nor is the list yet complete. There is a divinity for every stage of human life, from its earliest beginnings to the latest moment of existence, and Nænia is the goddess of the funeral dirge.

Food to support life is also abundantly protected by deities. The earth as a whole, and the cultivated earth, each has its divinities—Terra, Tellus, Tellumo, Altor, Rusor. Farms are under the protection of the goddess Rusina, downs are looked after by Collatina, valleys are sacred to Vallonia, and ridges and mountains to the god Jugatinus. When the grain is cast into the ground, and before the stalk appears above the soil, the goddess Seia must bless it; as soon as the blade is seen, Segetia takes charge of it; and when the ripened grain is stored, Tutilina

becomes its protectress. If the grain is troubled with rust, prayer must be raised to the god of rust, *Rubigus*; if the field is invaded by thorns, help must be sought from the god of thorns, *Spiniensis*. A single stalk of grain requires several deities to care for it—*Proserpina* presides over the germinating seeds, *Nodatus* has charge of the joints and knots of the stem, while *Volutina* is busily employed about the sheaths inclosing the ears of grain. When the sheaths open, then *Patelana* takes the place of *Volutina*; and when the stem stands equal with new ears, *Hostilina* watches with joy these signs of an abundant harvest. When it is in the flower, it is protected by *Flora*; when in the milk, by *Lacturnus*; when maturing, by *Matuta*; and when the crop is removed from the soil, the goddess *Runcina* guards the treasure.

We have extended these remarks far enough to illustrate the multitudinous character of the Roman gods.*

“Our country is so peopled with gods,” said a woman of Campania to Petronius, “that it is easier to find a god there than a man.” “Or there were at least sacred trees, stones, rocks,

* Augustine, Works, The City of God, Vol. I, pp. 144, 145, 149, 150, 158, 159, 249, 250, 288; Ante-Nicene Christian Library, The Writings of Tertullian, Ad Nationes, pp. 488, 489.

which were decked by heathen piety with garlands and ribbons, and which no one passed by without some sign of reverence." Laws were enacted against the introduction of foreign gods without the sanction of the Senate; but these laws seem to have availed little, especially after Rome became a world-empire. All gods were



THE PANTHEON, OR TEMPLE OF ALL THE GODS.
(As at present.)

tolerated. Upon the conquest of a province, its gods were invited to Rome. "If there be a god or goddess who has taken this people and city, N. u., under its protection, Deity, whosoever thou mayest be, I pray thee, I adjure thee, to forsake this people and city, to withdraw from this city and its temple, and come to Rome to

me and mine, that our city, our temples and sacrifices, may be acceptable to thee. If thou wilt do this, I vow to thy divinity temples and games." Thus, in solemn formula, the gods of all nations were invited to Roman hospitality. Rome demanded the recognition of her own gods everywhere, and was willing to extend the same generous courtesy to the gods of all lands and peoples.*

But all these gods could not permanently satisfy the Romans. There were, from time to time along down the centuries, gigantic efforts to uphold the religious system of Rome, but they were fruitless efforts. The deification of the emperor—a sort of monotheism in the midst of polytheism—held together decaying heathenism for a time, but the respite was brief. By resolution, both foreign men and foreign divinities were pressingly invited to the freedom of Rome, and efforts were made to make these strangers feel at home. The Romans sometimes gave the preference to foreign gods over their own native gods, but it availed nothing. The ancient religion became so obscured by reason of foreign elements that it is most difficult now to determine what is native and what is imported. We

* Uhlhorn, *Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism*, pp. 30, 37.

name several gods which may be regarded as distinctively Roman.

Jupiter, "the father of gods and men," the chief god of the Romans, resembles the Greek Zeus, with



JUPITER.

whose name his own is etymologically connected. He is the god of the sky, the air, and the firmament; and sends forth the lightning, the thunder, and the fertilizing rain. He impregnates

the atmosphere with the seeds of the fever and the pestilence. Through portents he reveals his will to men, and those who learn their interpretation may walk secure before heaven. A stone was the old symbol of Jupiter, and its meaning was never entirely forgotten. In later times, under Greek influence, the eagle became his symbol. The oak among trees, and the woodpecker among birds, were sacred to this god.

Jupiter is the general ruler of mankind, and the protector of human society. He guards the sanctity of oaths, the rights of strangers and suppliants, the unity of the State, and intercourse with other people. The minister of Jupiter declared war, and in his honor were celebrated triumphal processions. To him were also dedicated trophies of victory. He seems to have been the old god of agriculture and of the vine.

With Juno and Minerva he had a temple on Capitoline Hill, wherein his high priest, the Flamen Dialis, maintained his worship with perpetual burnt sacrifices.

Juno has no distinctive character, except as the protectress of women, especially matrons. She is the mere counterpart of Jupiter. Her marriage with the father of gods and men may have been an imported idea. There is little trace of nature in her character. If originally a

foreign deity, she was probably Etruscan. When the city of Veii was conquered, its patron goddess was brought to Rome by Camillus, and one of her chief cults was that of Juno Regina, on the Aventine. When Lanuvium surrendered, the cultus of Juno Sospita was carried to Rome, and established on Palatine Hill. The mint for the coining of money was in the temple of Juno Moneta. The Kalends were sacred to Juno, as the Ides to Jupiter. The chief feast of Juno was the Matronalia, which was celebrated on the Kalends of March, when maidens and wives of stainless character marched in procession to the temple of Lucina, on the Esquiline. Geese were her favorite bird, and those which were kept in the Capitoline temple gave timely warning of the Gallic attack.

Minerva, like Juno, may have been originally a goddess of the Etruscans, though the name would suggest a true Latin deity. She presides over all handicrafts, arts, sciences, and inventions. She is especially the goddess of intelligence, memory, and literature—"the thinking, calculating, inventive power personified." Poetry, music, sculpture, and painting were sacred to Minerva. Besides the temple on the Capitoline Hill, where she was worshiped in connection with Jupiter and Juno, she had an old

temple on the Aventine, which was a regular meeting-place for poets and actors. The day of dedication of the temple, and the birthday of the goddess, was the nineteenth of March. On this auspicious day a great festival was celebrated, which was called *quinquatrus*, because it fell on the fifth day after the Ides. This was a holiday for all schools, and when the scholars again assembled they brought commemorative fees to their teachers. Every home also celebrated this holiday; for Minerva was the patron of weaving and spinning, and every craft connected with the comfort and happiness of domestic life. The festival was afterward lengthened to five days, and games were introduced in answer to the Greek conception of Minerva as the goddess of war. As a war goddess she is represented in helmet, and with shield and coat of mail. There was a temple on Cælian Hill where the lesser *quinquatrus* was celebrated from the thirteenth to the fifteenth of June, chiefly by flute-players.

“The central object not only of Roman, but of Italian worship generally, in that epoch when the Italian stock still dwelt by itself in the peninsula, was, according to all indications, the god Maurs, or Mars, the killing god, pre-eminently regarded as the divine champion of the burgesses,

hurling the spear, protecting the flock, and overthrowing the foe." *

Father Mars, or Marspiter, was the god of heaven, giver of light and opener of the new year, who also sends the fertilizing rain and hurls the fearful thunder-bolt. Mamurius Veturius, beaten out of the city on the fifteenth of March, was symbolic of the departure of the old year. The first month March was named from Mars, and on the first day, the birthday of the god, there were various religious and political festivals, and the holy fire was renewed in the temple of Vesta. The sacred spear of Mars may have been originally the lightning, and his shield, like the ægis of Zeus and that of Athene, may have been the thunder-bolt. The wolf, the horse, and the woodpecker were sacred to Mars. As the heaven-god and sender of rain, Mars is the giver of fertility and increase. In some old cults he is the god of land, agriculture, and flocks. He also caused drought, sterility, and all evil. Like Jupiter, he had his oracles and priests. The Flamen Martialis presented to him burnt offerings. The twelve Palatine Salii, or "Dancers," danced in armor for many days, beginning with the first of March, through certain parts of the city, clashing their lances against their shields

* Mommsen, *History of Rome*, Vol. I, p. 222.

and repeating the prescribed songs. The twelve sacred shields, or *ancilia*, were preserved on the Palatine. One of these—said to have fallen from heaven, and the most sacred—was the pattern for all the others. The Campus Martius was dedicated to this god. Here the young men of Rome practiced warlike exercises. Quirinus may have been originally but a name of Mars; and though he had separate priests, the two gods never became wholly distinct in the conception of the Romans. Bellona bears the same relation to Mars as Juno bears to Jupiter. She is his sister or daughter, and the goddess of war. Sometimes she appears as his nurse or charioteer. She had a temple in Campus Martius, where the Senate was accustomed to meet when they would discuss the claims of a general to a triumph, or receive ambassadors from foreign States. In front of her temple was the *columna bellica*, where the ceremony of declaring war was performed.

“A college of priests, called *Bellonarii*, conducted her worship, and were bound, when they offered sacrifice in her honor, to wound their own arms or legs, and either to offer up upon her altar the blood which flowed from their wounds or else to swallow it themselves.”*

The twenty-fourth of March, which was ap-

* Rawlinson, *The Religions of the Ancient World*, p. 220.

pointed for these services, was called "the day of blood." These gloomy features in her worship may have been modifications from Asiatic influence.

Vesta was a most ancient divinity, and was the goddess of the hearth, especially the national hearth. She had a temple on Palatine Hill, and



TEMPLE OF VESTA.

(As at Present.)

in the immediate vicinity was her sacred grove. Six Vestal Virgins, under the control of the Pontifices, kept the sacred fire ever burning on her altar. They purified the shrine every morning with water brought from the Egerian Spring, and at stated times presented offerings to the goddess. At the festival held in her honor on



RUINS OF THE TEMPLE OF SATURN AT ROME.

the ninth of June, Roman matrons with bare feet resorted to her temple. The eternal fire burning in her temple was her only and sufficient symbol.

Ceres was the goddess of agriculture, and was early connected with Liber, the god of the vineyard. Cerus and Cerie were a god and goddess worshiped by the early Italians, and may be connected with Ceres. Her worship was merged in that of the Greek Demeter.

Saturnus, and his wife Ops, are among the oldest deities of Italy. An altar erected to Saturnus, at the foot of the Capitoline, is said to have preceded the foundation of Rome. Under or behind his temple was the Roman treasury, in which were preserved the archives and treasures of the State. The oldest form of national verse was called the Saturnian. He is the god of agriculture, and his hollow statue, filled with olive-oil, speaks of fertility and abundance. His symbol is a sickle, which he bears in his hand. His feet were bound with wool. His festival, the Saturnalia, lasted from the seventeenth to the twenty-fourth of December. "The woollen fetters were taken from the feet of the image of Saturn, and each man offered a pig. During the festival, schools were closed; no war was declared or battle fought; no punishment was inflicted. In place of the toga, an undress garment was worn.

Distinctions of rank were laid aside; slaves sat at table with their masters or were actually waited on by them, and the utmost freedom of speech was allowed them. Gambling with dice, at other times illegal, was now permitted and practiced. All classes exchanged gifts, the commonest being wax tapers and clay dolls. These dolls were especially given to children, and the makers of them held a regular fair at this time. Varro thought that these dolls represented original sacrifices of human beings to the infernal gods.* In later times Saturnus was identified with Cronos.

Ops was the goddess of labor, and hence of plenty and wealth—"opulence." She was generally worshiped in connection with Saturnus, but had also her separate sanctuary on the Capitoline. "Ops, like Ceres, is sometimes confounded with Tellus, but the three goddesses were to the Latin mind distinct, Tellus being a personation of the earth itself, Ceres of the productive power of nature, which brings forth fruits out of the earth, and Ops of the human labor without which the productive power runs to waste, and is insufficient for the sustenance of life."*

Hercules was a native Italian god though the name bears resemblance to the Greek Heracles with whom he was early identified. He was the

* Rawlinson, *The Religions of the Ancient World*, pp. 223, 224.

god of the gains which come from adventure, and of any extraordinary increase of wealth. At his most holy altar in the cattle market the general was wont to present to him the tenth of the spoil, and the merchant the tenth of his increase. He became the god of mercantile covenants, generally, which in early times were frequently confirmed at his altar by oath. Hence he was the *Deus Fidius*, "the god of good faith." "The worship of *Hercules* was from an early date among the most widely diffused; he was, to use the words of an ancient author, adored in every hamlet of Italy, and altars were everywhere erected to him in the streets of the cities and along the country roads." *

Mercurius was the god of barter, trade, and all commercial transactions. There was no trade at Rome till Italy felt the influence of the Greek colonies. All the usages and religious ceremonies connected with trade were borrowed from the Greeks. *Mercurius* was not officially recognized till the year B. C. 495, when also the Greek god *Hermes* was introduced into Rome under his name. It was probably at this time that a regular college of merchants was instituted under the protection of this god. On the Ides of May the *mercuriales* celebrated a festival in honor of their patron, with

* Mommsen, *History of Rome*, Vol. I, p. 241.

whom, under Greek influence, Maia, the mother of Hermes, was associated.

“Mercury became the god, not only of the *mercatores* and of the corn-trade, but of buying and selling in general; and it appears that, at least in the streets where shops were common, little chapels and images of the god were erected. There was a spring dedicated to Mercury between his temple and the *Porta Capena*. Every shopman drew water from this spring on the Ides of May, and sprinkled it with a laurel twig over his head and over his goods, at the same time entreating Mercury to remove from his head and his goods the guilt of all his deceits. The art of the Roman tradesman was evidently like that of an Oriental tradesman of modern times, and the word *mercurialis* was probably used as equivalent to ‘cheat.’” The position of Mercurius among the Roman gods was a low one, and his influence in the nation was not great.

Neptunus has been identified with the Etruscan water-god Nethuns. The earliest reference to his worship is on the occasion of the first *lectisternium* held in B. C. 399, when the Sibylline Books included him among the gods to whom this festival was dedicated. His cult was fully established in the second century of the Republic, when it was united to that of Mercurius. The Neptunalia was

celebrated on the twenty-third day of July with games, banquets, and carousals. In earlier times the god Portunus was thanked for naval victories. Several Roman admirals are known to have sacrificed to Neptune. The god became completely identified with the Greek Poseidon.

II.

PRIESTS AND FESTIVALS.

THE divinities named in the previous chapter may be called the twelve great gods. There are still other native deities worthy of mention.

Silvanus was an old god of the woods and fields, and of the cattle. The Pelasgians dedicated a grove to him near Cære. Pigs were sacrificed to him, and he received offerings of milk at the harvest festivals. He is also represented as the god of boundaries, and on votive tablets as the god of planting and gardening. Virgil crowns him with fennel and lilies, and makes him carry in his hand an uprooted cypress. "On a relief he appears with a crown of pine-branches in his hair, a pine-branch in his left hand, a skin filled with fruits hanging about his neck, a pruning-knife in his right hand, and a dog by his side." He was closely connected with rural life.

Pomona was the goddess of orchards, loved by silvan deities, but wooed and won by Vertumnus, the god of the turning year. She had a special priest, and there was a grove sacred to her about twelve miles from Rome.

Flora was the goddess of spring-time and flowers. A festival of great gayety was held in her honor from the twenty-eighth day of April to the third of May. She had a temple near the Circus Maximus, and a Flamen Floralis was attached to her worship. She says of herself: "I enjoy perpetual spring. *To me* the year is always most beauteous; the tree always bears its foliage, the earth its herbage. A fruitful garden in the fields of my dowry is mine. The breeze cherishes it; it is irrigated by a spring of trickling water. This my husband has filled with flowers of the choicest kinds; and he says, 'Do thou, Goddess, rule the empire of the flowers.' Ofttimes have I desired to reckon the tints as they were arranged, and I could not. Their multitude exceeded all number. When first the dewy rime has been dashed from the leaves, and the variegated flowers warm in the beams of the sun, the Seasons, arrayed in painted robes, assemble, and gather my presents into their light baskets. Forthwith *to them* are added the Graces, and they plait the chaplets, and the garlands *destined* to bind their heavenly locks. I was the first to spread the new seed throughout the unlimited natures. Before then, the earth was of but one tint."*

* Ovid, *The Fasti*, Riley's Translation, Vol. I, pp. 186, 187.

Faunus presided over flocks and herds. The Faunalia, in honor of Faunus and Fauna, was celebrated annually in December.

Janus was the god of the sun. He was represented with a face in the front, and another on the back of his head. The month of January was sacred to him, as also all other beginnings. He had a temple in the Forum, with two doors opposite to each other, which, in time of war, stood open, and in time of peace were shut. The temple was thrice closed on this account—once during the reign of Numa, again after the first Punic war, and a third time after the battle of Actium, when Cæsar Augustus became sole ruler of the empire.



JANUS.

Several deities belonged peculiarly to the home and State. Such were Terminus, the god of boundaries; Consus, the god of secret counsel; and the Penates, the gods of property. The Penates presided over the kitchen and the store-room. None but pure and chaste persons were permitted to enter the store-room. The images of the Penates, two in number, represented as

dancing and holding aloft a drinking-horn in token of joy and plenty, were placed on the family hearth. The old Roman, in company with his family, offered a morning sacrifice and prayer to the household gods. "Before meals the blessing of the gods was asked, and after the meal, but before dessert, there was a short silence, and a portion of food was placed on the hearth and burned. If the hearth and the images were not in the eating-room, either the images were brought and put on the table, or before the shrine was placed a table, on which were set a salt-cellar, food, and a burning lamp." The Kalends, the Nones, and the Ides, the Caristia held on the twenty-second of February, and the Saturnalia, were set apart for special family worship. On these and other joyous days the images were crowned, and there were presented offerings of cakes, honey, wine, incense, and sometimes a pig. Not only had each family its Penates, but also each clan; and the State had its public Penates. These household gods had a temple of their own in Rome, but were also worshiped in the temple of Vesta. Closely connected with this worship was that of the Lares, the deified ancestors still living in their graves in the house, and worshiped as the guardians and protectors of the family. On the hearth

between the Penates was an image of the Lar. When the Lares became spirits of terror, they were called Lemures and Larvæ. The *Lar familiaris* was the head of the family and of the family cultus, while the *Lares publici* belonged to the State religion. According to Varro, there were two hundred and sixty-five stations for statues of Lares at the corners of the streets of Rome.

Many gods of lesser rank were personifications of abstract qualities, and many were distinctively nature gods, while a multitude of others were borrowed from the Greeks.

The State established priesthoods for the worship of the principal gods. The highest order in the priesthoods was the Flamines, or "Kindlers," so called because they presented burnt offerings. The great Kindlers of Mars, Quirinus, and Jupiter were taken only from the patrician rank. The highest of all was the Flamen of Jupiter, who was entitled to a licitor, a seat in the Senate, the curule chair, and the *toga prætexta*, woven of thick wool by his wife. The number of Flamines was afterwards enlarged, and Vertumnus, Flora, Pomona, and Vulcan had each his lesser Kindler. There were fifteen Flamines in all, but at a still later period this number was further increased. The Flamen

attended to the whole worship of the temple to which he was devoted.

In addition to the Flāmen, each temple had a college of priests, which might consist of all the males of a particular priestly family, but was more generally a close corporation, limited in the number of its members. Vacancies in the college were filled by election. There was a college of Salii, or "dancing priests," attached to the temple of Mars, on the Palatine Hill, and another connected with the temple of Quirinus, on the Quirinal.

The Luperci celebrated the Lupercalia on the fifteenth of February, when goats and a dog were offered in sacrifice. "After the sacrifice, two of the Luperci were led to the altar; their foreheads were touched with a bloody sword, and the blood wiped off with wool dipped in milk. Then the ritual required that the two young men shall laugh. The sacrificial feast followed, after which the Luperci cut thongs from the skins of the victims, and ran in two bands round the walls of the old Palatine city, striking people who crowded near. These thongs were called *Februa*, hence the name of the month February." The rite was originally peculiar to the tribe of the Ramses, and was dedicated to Inuus, an old Italian deity.

“Our Roman forefathers called atoning sacrifices by the name of ‘Februa,’ and even now many traces of *its meaning* confirm this signification of the expression. The Pontiffs ask wool of the king of the sacrifices and of the Flamen, the name of which, in the ancient dialect, was ‘Februa;’ and the purifying substances which the lictor takes for the houses when ascertained *as being impure*, the parched spelt with the grain of salt, are called by the same name. This, too, is the name of the bough which, lopped from a consecrated tree, covers with its foliage the holy temples of the priests. I myself have seen the Flaminica asking for the ‘Februa;’ a bough of pine was presented to her, making this request for the ‘Februa’ *by name*. In a word, whatever there is by means of which our breasts are purified, it had with our unshaven ancestors this name. From these circumstances the month derives its name, *either* because the Luperci, with thongs of hide, purify all the country, and consider that *rite* an expiation; or because the season is purified, the shades of the dead being appeased when the days devoted to their offerings have passed by. Our ancients believed that purification was efficacious to remove every curse and every cause of evil.” *

* Ovid, The Fasti, Riley's Translation, Vol. I, pp. 46, 47.

The college of Vestal Virgins, connected with the worship of Vesta, having charge of the sacred fire, and the "tokens" of Rome, awaken great interest whenever mentioned. "The House of the Vestals" was discovered by Lanciani in 1883, at the foot of the Palatine Hill. This most brilliant discovery brought to light many pedestals, statues, busts, coins, inscriptions, and other objects of antiquarian interest, and has added much to our knowledge of this religious corporation.

The Vestal Virgins, six in number, "clad in snow-white garments, which reflected, as it were, the purity of their minds and souls; in the very prime of beauty, youth, and strength; daughters of the noblest families; depositaries of state secrets; confidants of the imperial household, and faithful keepers of the secret tokens of the Roman Commonwealth,"—were held in reverential honor, enjoyed many privileges, and wielded vast influence.

Zosimus, the historian, mentions the fact that, after the Virgins had left their house, bearing doubtless the sacred tokens, Princess Serena entered the building, and took a rich necklace from a statue of the goddess. Rome being besieged by Alaric, Serena was suspected of secret connivance with the enemy. She was doubtless



STATUE OF A VESTAL VIRGIN.

innocent, but was put to death. This was looked upon as a just punishment for her sacrilege. She had entered the most sacred place of Vesta. "Here she was so captivated by the beauty of a necklace that she took it with her own hands from the shoulders of the goddess, and fixed it on her own neck. An old woman, the last surviving Vestal, having witnessed by chance the profanation, cursed the princess, and predicted that, sooner or later, she would sadly expiate her crime. Serena, at first, took no notice of the awful malediction; but the old Vestal had told the truth—Serena died by strangulation!"*

The college of the *Fratres Arvales*, twelve in number, and selected from the highest patrician families, were devoted to Ceres, in whose honor as the *Dea Dia* they celebrated the great annual festival, and offered public sacrifices for the fertility of the fields. The new grain was blessed on each of the three days of the festival. On the second day the ceremonies were performed in a grove, when two pigs, a white cow, and a fat sheep were sacrificed. The grove where they assembled was "at the fifth milestone of the *Via Campana*, on the slope of the hills which now overlook the farm of *La Magliana*." This

* Lanciani, *Ancient Rome in the Light of Recent Discoveries*, pp. 133, 135, 176, 177.

slope was excavated in 1868 and 1869, and richly rewarded the explorer.

“The very temple of the Dea Dia was discovered—a round, marble structure, raised on a very high platform, on the vertical surface of which the annals, or yearly records, of the fraternity were engraved. To speak of the importance of these annals—which begin with the reign of Augustus and stop with that of Gordianus II, a lapse of two centuries and a half, and which contain an almost incredible amount of archæological, historical, and chronological information—would not be consistent with the spirit of this chapter. I must notice, however, one particular, which is evidently a recollection of the age of bronze. The annals of each year were engraved on the marble basement of the temple during the month of April, and were engraved, of course, with iron or steel tools. To expiate this profanation, in the same month of each year, sacrifices were offered, *ob ferri inlationem et elationem*, for the introduction and removal of iron within the sacred precinct—a sow and a sheep were slain over the altar, and their flesh was eaten afterwards by attendants and sacristans of an inferior order.” *

* Lanciani, *Ancient Rome in the Light of Recent Discoveries*, pp. 42, 43.

The duties of the *Sodales Titii* were quite similar. The thirty *Flamines Curiales* offered sacrifices for the preservation of the *Curies* of the old Roman people.

Every worshiper might address personally any deity with whom he wished to communicate. But to hold converse with a god was not, after all, an easy matter. Only those familiarly acquainted with a god could understand aright his language. The priest was educated to interpret the divine. He could not only understand, but also influence the will of the god, and even overreach him for the good of man. Hence the importance of the priest in religious worship is most evident. Still more important were those men specially skilled in all kinds of religious learning. These wise men formed the colleges of sacred lore.

The Roman priests, like the priests of the Greek, and in fact all other ancient religions, were compassed about by a great multitude of restrictions and observances to which they were compelled to give most earnest heed. The *Flamen Dialis* was not permitted to touch a dead body or to enter a house where one was burned. He must not see any work done on holy days, nor might he venture to uncover in the open air. If a man were brought into his house in bonds, the

bonds were removed, and drawn up through a hole in the roof and thence let down into the street. His hair could be cut only by a free man, and with a bronze knife, and his hair and nails when cut must be buried under a lucky tree. The feet of his bed were daubed with mud. He



ROMAN PRIEST AND PRIESTESS.

might not touch wheaten flour or leavened bread. He was permitted neither to touch nor name a goat, a dog, raw meat, beans, or ivy. None but sacred fire could be carried out of his house. He must not ride a horse, or even touch one, and no knot must be found on any part of his garments. He must not wear a broken ring. His wife was compelled to observe nearly

the same rules, besides others which were peculiar to herself." *

"The priesthoods were charged with the worship of a specific divinity; the skilled colleges, on the other hand, were charged with the preservation of traditional rules regarding those more general religious observances, the proper fulfillment of which implied a certain amount of information, and rendered it necessary that the State, in its own interest, should provide for the faithful transmission of that information. These close corporations supplying their own vacancies, of course, from the ranks of the burgesses, became in this way the depositaries of skilled arts and sciences." †

The Pontifices, under the Pontifex Maximus, who was the highest religious authority in the State, exercised control over all the priests, and performed the general functions of the State religion. It is probable that there was no supreme Pontifex under the emperors, but that the functions of the sacred office were discharged by the emperors in person. The *rex sacrorum*, under the Republic, succeeded to the sacrificial duties which had been performed by the king, but the *Pontifex*

* Frazer, The Golden Bough, Vol. I, pp. 117, 118; cf. the references given in this work.

† Mommsen, History of Rome, Vol. I, p. 229.

Maximus inherited the substance of power in sacred things. The Pontifices claimed to possess professional "knowledge of things human and divine." The supreme Pontiff dwelt close to the sacred hearth of the State. He appointed the Flamens and the Vestal Virgins, and had charge of their cults and those exercises of public religion for which no priests were specially provided. The Pontifices furnished all technical information and guidance on all great and important religious occasions. They controlled the calendar and kept the pontifical archives or annual chronicles of public events, and to them was assigned the declaration of the laws of religion. They taught how to escape the threatenings of omens and prodigies.

The Augurs interpreted, according to the books of divination, the will of Jupiter on the occasion of every public transaction. At first there seem to have been but two augurs, one from each of the tribes Ramnes and Tities. Numa added two more, and again two for the tribe Luceres. Sulla made the number fifteen, and Cæsar added one. The office, like that of the Pontifices and Flamines, was for life, and the college filled its own vacancies. The augurs observed the sky, and watched the course of the lightning and the flight of birds. Such observations could be made only in the city of Rome, except by con-

secrating a spot of earth to represent the hearth of the Eternal City. The notes of birds, and their manner of feeding were not forgotten. Fowls were kept in cages by a servant that the augurs might not be without a ready means of reading the will of heaven. The motions and sounds of quadrupeds and serpents also revealed the will of the gods, though this method of divination was less frequently employed, and had gone out of use at the time of Cicero. Any unusual phenomena were considered timely warnings. Auspices were taken by casting lots, and by examining the entrails of sacrifices. In the latter case Etruscan haruspices were generally employed. The occasions for the consultation of augurs were such as the founding of colonies, the beginning of a battle, the assembling of an army, the sittings of the Senate, the decisions of peace and war, the election of magistrates, and their entering on office.

“And our ancestors were persuaded that much virtue resides in certain words, and therefore prefaced their various enterprises with certain auspicious phrases; such as, ‘May good, and prosperous, and happy fortune attend!’ They commenced all the public ceremonies of religion with these words, ‘Keep silence;’ and when they announced any holidays, they commanded that all

lawsuits and quarrels should be suspended. Likewise, when the chief who forms a colony makes a lustration and review of it, or when a general musters an army, or a censor the people, they always choose those who have lucky names to prepare the sacrifices. The consuls in their military enrollments likewise take care that the first soldier enrolled shall be one with a fortunate name." *

Divination by dreams is common to all nations. While the body slept, the soul was thought to have been awake and most vigorous. "Since the soul has lived from all eternity, and is engaged with spirits innumerable, it therefore beholds all things in the universe, if it only observes a watchful attitude." The Romans perhaps inherited the doctrine of metempsychosis from the Greeks through Ennius, the poet of Calabria.

The Fetiales, twelve in number, were the living repository to preserve the knowledge of all treaties. They pronounced authoritatively on all matters of law as between nations. They decided when a treaty had been broken, demanded satisfaction, and declared war. At the conclusion of a treaty they offered sacrifices, thus giving to treaty obligations a sacred character.

* Cicero, *De Divinatione*, i, 45.

The *Duumviri*, two in number as the name suggests, were the keepers of the Sibylline Books, and interpreted their prophecies. These books were especially consulted in cases of pestilence, and upon the occurrence of any extraordinary prodigies.

These various colleges of priests never could become dangerous to the State. Their duties were only to interpret and to advise; never to take the initiative, and never to execute. They could only answer questions. "The Romans, notwithstanding all their zeal for religion, adhered with unbending strictness to the principle that the priest ought to remain completely powerless in the State; and, excluded from all command, ought, like any other burgess, to render obedience to the humblest magistrate." *

The Roman religion was business-like, and consisted largely in songs, games, dances, and banquets. The pig was an offering most acceptable to the gods. All extravagance in expense and excess in joy were sternly rebuked. The gods, as well as the Roman people, were taught to practice frugality. These were allowed little play for the imagination, and little room for enthusiastic fanaticism, unrestrained indulgence, and

* Mommsen, *History of Rome*, Vol. I, p. 232.

the frenzy of superstition. Sin was considered a crime against the gods, and punishment was the expiation of guilt. The slaying of an enemy in war, and the execution of a criminal, were equally expiatory sacrifices offered to offended divinities. When the guilt which stirred the gods to anger could not be fastened upon any particular person or persons, they might still be appeased by one who voluntarily offered himself as a victim. Thus national calamity could be removed, and disaster in battle turned to victory.

There were several usages which may have been reminiscences of ancient human sacrifices.

The thirty puppets, plaited of rushes, and thrown annually into the Tiber, may have been a survival of thirty victims which, in most ancient times, were offered annually at the Lemuralia.

In comparison with the religion of the Greeks, the religion of the Romans was commonplace, matter-of-fact, unartistic, bald, barren, dull, tame, stupid, and tasteless; while yet it was most sober, business-like, earnest, and practical. Worship, prayers, sacrifices, and vows seem to have been considered mere commercial obligations, to be punctually met. The old Roman religion

had no images of the gods. As no bargain could be made by proxy, so no priest could stand between the worshiper and his gods. These early gods seem to have had no genealogies and no family relationships. Foreign and later importations created many changes. The religion was fruitless in art, poetry, and all imaginative speculation.

III.

THE MORALITY OF STOICISM.

AMONG the philosophic schools of the classic nations, that of the Stoics taught the purest morality; and on this account, more than because of its philosophical discussions, it has become one of the most celebrated.

This school was founded by Zeno, of Citium, at the close of the fourth century before the commencement of the Christian era. It took its name from the stoa, or painted corridor, on the north side of the market-place at Athens, where its founder discoursed with his disciples.

Our chief source of information concerning the early Stoics and their teachings must always be the work of Diogenes Laertius. His "Lives of the Philosophers" is invaluable, though evidently many times the author understood the subject but imperfectly. In his account of the Stoics, he does not always distinguish what belongs to Zeno, what to his immediate disciples, and what to later teachers. We can not, however, be far out of the way in regard to the main principles and teachings of the school as expounded by the great master. We present

some of the features which characterize the school.

The wise man, says the Stoic, lives according to nature; by which is meant not only universal nature, but also his own nature as a part of universal nature. This comes to the same thing as saying that he lives according to virtue, and according to the will of the Universal Governor and Ruler of all things. He does nothing which the common law of mankind or right reason condemns. In this consists his chief good or highest happiness.

The beautiful is the only good. "Beauty is the flower of virtue." There is nothing intermediate between vice and virtue. He who has one virtue has all virtues. All goods are equal, and each good is to be desired in the highest degree. Nothing is good which it is possible to use ill. Anything has value only as it helps man to live according to nature.

The wise man is not disturbed by grief. This dismisses all pity, emulation, and jealousy, all pain, perturbation, and sorrow, and all anguish and confusion.

He is not moved by fear. This banishes all apprehension, shame, and hesitation, and all perplexity, trepidation, and anxiety.

He neither feels nor seeks pleasure. This

destroys all possibility of enjoyment, rejoicing at evil, irrational delight, and extravagant joy.

The wise man is free from vanity, and yet austere. He is not moved by clemency; he would make a severe punisher of crime.

As to his emotional nature, the wise man is barely saved from becoming a gate-post by having assigned him three good dispositions. These are joy as opposed to pleasure, caution as opposed to fear, and will as opposed to desire. These are called rational dispositions. The first brings delight, mirth, and good spirits; the second, reverence and modesty; and the third, good-will, placidity, salutation, and affection.

We follow in the above one of the classifications brought forward in the school.

The wise man is godlike. He has something within him "which is as it were a god." He is pious, and pays proper reverence to the gods; he worships the gods and sacrifices to them; in fact, he is the only true priest, as he is also the only true king. He is just and holy, and keeps himself pure. The gods themselves can not withhold their admiration. He is the only free man, and the only man fit to become a magistrate, judge, or orator. Everything belongs to the wise man, and he is never in error. True

friendship can exist only in the heart of the virtuous man.

All errors are equal. "For if one thing that is true is not more true than another thing that is true, neither is one thing that is false more false than another thing that is false; so, too, one deceit is not greater than another, nor one sin than another. For the man who is a hundred furlongs from Canopus and the man who is only one, are both equally not in Canopus; and so, too, he who commits a greater sin and he who commits a less are both equally not in the right path." *

The Stoics professed belief in one supreme god, and yet did not break away from the polytheism of their fathers. Their one god, however, was the god of pantheism, and so remained to the last. They never emancipated themselves from superstition, and resorted to divination.

We need not name the many philosophers who helped make the school illustrious. As in the case of Zeno, their teachings come only to us second-hand.

Stoicism was never really at home in Greece. Its greatest expounders were foreigners. But its adopted country was most congenial. In Rome it especially flourished. We may study

* Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers*, pp. 301-317.

the moral system of Panætius, of the middle school, in the first two books of the *De Officiis* of Cicero, which are largely taken from his lost work. But, omitting all other names, we will content ourselves with a brief study of the three great Stoics of Rome.

Lucius Annæus Seneca was a native of Corduba, in Hispania, and was born about seven years before the commencement of the Christian era. His father, Marcus Annæus Seneca was a Roman knight, a professional rhetorician, and an intelligent man of the world, with a sincere contempt for philosophy. His mother, Helvia, was of a noble nature, strong in intellect, untarnished in virtue, and of remarkable sweetness of character. His brother, Marcus Annæus Novatus, was known in history as Junius Gallio, having been adopted by his father's friend of that name. He is the Gallio of Acts, who "cared for none of these things." (Acts xviii, 17.)*

Seneca became a powerful advocate and the most illustrious literary character of his age. He acquired an enormous fortune, but thereby suffered in his influence as a Stoic philosopher. Indeed he could not well be a consistent philosopher and at the same time a man of the world. He took public office, which he adorned by his wisdom and intellectual gifts. But he could not

stem the tide of corruption and wickedness, and, upon suspicion, was banished to Corsica by the Emperor Claudius. His philosophy failed to sustain him in his exile; for, while he gave himself to authorship, his works were not free from the most sycophantic and fulsome flattery of Claudius, whom in his heart he must have considered a monster.

Agrippina, a demoness incarnate, a tigress gorged with human blood, secured the recall of Seneca; and when her son, the if possible more satanic Nero, ascended the throne of Rome, the philosopher became his tutor. He may have despaired of maintaining his influence over his royal master if he were to attempt to teach him the highest virtue, and hence was content to enforce the virtue of mere expediency. His own virtue suffered. He became an accomplice in crime, and must be even branded as a murderer. Nero came to the conclusion that he could do without him, and, suspecting him of being connected with the conspiracy of Piso, condemned him to death. He opened his own veins, and thus died surrounded by his friends.

The age in which Seneca lived was characterized by the purest moral teaching, and yet explored the lowest depths of degradation and infamy. While many did not believe in the old

gods at all, they yet gave themselves up to superstition, and put their trust in the fooleries of sorcerers, astrologers, exorcists, and every impostor and quack. Gibbon says: "The common worship was regarded by the people as equally true, by the philosophers as equally false, and by the magistrates as equally useful." Religion became a pretense and a mockery.

Never were luxury and extravagance carried to a higher pitch. Men abandoned manly pursuits, and resorted to debauchery and gluttony. They invented and diligently practiced every refinement of vice. They sought the arena, in which gladiators and beasts tore one another in pieces, and their constant demand was for more blood. Slaves were treated with the greatest cruelty and brutality. They were tortured, they were murdered—sometimes for mere pleasure. The great multitude were ground by poverty, with the hope of nothing better, while the wealthy despoiled whole provinces to satisfy their tables. This wild extravagance, this unspeakable cruelty, this frantic wickedness, this revelry in crimes beyond nature and below nature,—all was but an attempt to feed on husks a soul created for the ambrosia and nectar of the gods. It is not a matter for wonder that many sought refuge in suicide.

Seneca recommended suicide as the way of escape from worldly troubles: "I have placed every good thing within your own breasts. It is your good fortune not to need any good fortune. 'Yet many things befall you which are sad, dreadful, hard to be borne.' Well, as I have not been able to remove them from your path, I have given your minds strength to combat all. Bear them bravely. In this you can surpass God himself. He is beyond suffering evil; you are above it. Despise poverty; no man lives as poor as he was born. Despise pain; either it will cease or you will cease. Despise death; it either ends you or takes you elsewhere. Despise fortune; I have given her no weapon that can reach the mind. Above all, I have taken care that no man should hold you captive against your will. The way of escape lies open before you; if you do not choose to fight, you may fly."*

In such words God is represented as addressing men. Petronius, who was an arbiter of questions of taste at the court of Nero, having been implicated in the Pisonian conspiracy, determined to destroy himself. His veins were opened, and while his life-blood was flowing, ludicrous poems were read to him to excite his laughter. When something especially laughable was read, he had

* Seneca, *Minor Dialogues*, i, 6.

his veins tied up for a short time that he might fully enjoy it. Pliny counts death the greatest blessing which nature has bestowed upon man, and says that "the very best feature in connection with it is, that every person has it in his own power to procure it for himself." *

There are those who complain because they are bound to this body, and are compelled to care for it, and guard it from danger. They would fain be released. To all such, Epictetus says: "Wait for God; when he shall give the signal and release you from this service, then go to him; but for the present endure to dwell in the place where he has put you. . . . Do not depart without a reason." Again, the philosopher says: "In sum, remember this; the door is open; be not more timid than little children, but as they say, when the thing does not please them, 'I will play no longer,' so do you, when things seem to you of such a kind, say, I will no longer play, and be gone, but if you stay, do not complain." †

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus advises if a man is not pleased with his surroundings, then "get away out of life." He approves the pro-

* Pliny, *Natural History*, xxviii, 3; cf. ii, 5; vii, 53, 54.

† Epictetus, i, 9, 24; cf. Horace, *Epp.* ii, 2, 213.

verbial resolution : "The house is smoky, and I quit it." *

Seneca speaks still more plainly. To him who complains of oppression, he says: "Madman, why do you groan? for what are you waiting? for some enemy to avenge you by the destruction of your entire nation, or for some powerful king to arrive from a distant land? Wherever you turn your eyes you may see an end to your woes. Do you see that precipice? down that lies the road to liberty. Do you see that sea? that river? that well? Liberty sits at the bottom of them. Do you see that tree? Stunted, blighted, dried up though it be, yet liberty hangs from its branches. Do you see your own throat, your own neck, your own heart? They are so many ways of escape from slavery. Are these modes which I point out too laborious, and needing much strength and courage? Do you ask what path leads to liberty? I answer, any vein in your body." †

The Stoics believed in the gods, and taught that they should be revered. The gods act under no restraint, but their own will is their sufficient law. They have established an order which they will never change because they will

* Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, v, 29.

† Seneca, Minor Dialogues, v, 15.

never regret their original decision. Their own force holds them to their purpose, so that they will never stop short or desert to the other side. It is from no weakness that they persevere, but they choose to continue in the best course. Not only did they have regard for man in the original arrangement of the universe; but they also assist man of set purpose, and hence lay him under obligation. They may have higher aims than the preservation of the human race, yet from the beginning their thought has been directed to our comfort, and the scheme of the world has been arranged in a fashion to prove that our interests were neither their least nor last concern. The immortal gods have always held us most dear, and have bestowed upon us the greatest possible honor, a place nearest to themselves.

The gods send affliction for our good. In the army the most hazardous services are assigned to the bravest soldiers. We see men who are good and acceptable to the gods, toiling, sweating, and painfully struggling upwards, while bad men run riot and are steeped in pleasures. Let us reflect that modesty pleases us in our sons, but forwardness in our slaves; the former are held in check while the boldness of the latter is encouraged. God acts in like manner. "He does not pet the good man; he tries him, hardens

him, and fits him for himself." The government of the world is a monarchy; "our liberty is to obey God."

We owe to the gods a debt of gratitude which we should not neglect to pay. "Avaricious as you are, it is easy for you to give them thanks, without expense; lazy, though you be, you can do it without labor." *

The soul of man has been placed beyond the reach of all possible harm. We shall feel our sorrows, if we be human; we shall bear them, if we be not unmanly. This trumpery body, the prison and fetter of the spirit, may be tossed about; "upon it tortures, robberies, and diseases may work their will; but the spirit itself is holy and eternal, and upon it no one can lay hands." All that is best for man's enjoyment—this world, the greatest and most beautiful of the productions of God, and the mind which can behold and admire it—are our own property and will not desert us as long as we ourselves endure. The treasures of this world which we so carefully guard and are ready to defend at the risk of our lives—treasures for which our fleets dye the seas with blood, and our armies shake the walls of cities; for which we so often violate all ties of relation-

* Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, vi, 23; ii, 30; *Minor Dialogues*, i, 1, 4; vii, 15.

ship and friendship—are not ours, but are “a kind of deposit, which is on the point of passing into other hands.” Our souls are our own; they can not be harmed. We may keep them pure. What care we for meaner things? You may take riches from the wise man; you leave him all that is truly his; he is happy in the present, he does not fear for the future. He can maintain his virtue. The path of virtue is closed to none, but open to all; it invites all, freemen or slaves, kings or exiles; it requires no qualifications of family or property; “it is satisfied with a mere man.”

“Even though you be hard pressed, and violently attacked by the enemy, still it is base to give way; hold the post assigned to you by nature. You ask what this post is? it is that of being a man.”*

“Fortune lashes and mangles us. Well, let us endure it. It is not cruelty; it is a struggle, in which the oftener we engage the braver we shall become.”†

We should practice humanity, and always keep our tempers in spite of losses, wrongs, abuses, and sarcasms, enduring with magnanimity our short-lived troubles. While we worry, death

*Seneca, *Minor Dialogues*, xi, 8, 11; xii, 17; vii, 26; iii, 18; ii, 19; *De Beneficiis*, vi, 3.

†Seneca, *Minor Dialogues*, i, 4.

comes to our door. If we abandon our minds to anger or any passion, the downward tendency of our vices will carry us off and hurl us into the lowest depths. We should reject the first incentives to anger, and resist its very beginnings. It is hard to hold anger in check when it has once begun, because then reason goes for nothing. Passion will do as much as it chooses, not merely as much as we would allow.

Fabianus says: "We ought to fight against the passions by main force, not by skirmishing, and upset their line of battle by a home charge, not by inflicting trifling wounds. I do not approve of dallying with sophisms; they must be crushed, not merely scratched."*

Life is not a good thing, but to live well. Keep a good conscience. It is of value on the rack or in the fire. A heart filled with a good conscience will rejoice in the fire, which will only make it shine more brightly before the world. Men should free themselves from all hindrances to good living. Riches, pleasures, business should be counted nothing when compared with a virtuous life. Men have abandoned all, and yet have not learned how to live, still less to live as wise men.

Length of life is not the greatest blessing.

* Seneca, *Minor Dialogues*, v, 43; iii, 7, 8; x, 10.

The delay of death will make life longer, not pleasanter. A man should never consider the cost of being virtuous. She never allures by gain nor deters by loss. She never bribes any one by hopes and promises. "We must go to her, trampling what is merely useful under our feet. Whithersoever she may call us or send us we must go, without any regard for our private fortunes, sometimes without sparing even our own blood, nor must we ever refuse to obey any of her commands."*

Pleasure is changeable and unreliable. It dies at the very moment when it charms us most. On the other hand, the highest good is immortal. It knows no ending; it does not admit of either satiety or regret. Whatever we can hold in our hands or see with our eyes is transitory, but a kindness lasts after that by means of which it is bestowed is gone. We may make worldly goods really our own only by giving them away. We should give in the way in which we ourselves would like to receive.†

If any one gave you a few acres of land, or filled your chest with money, or presented you

* Seneca, *Minor Dialogues*, iii, 33; iv, 21; x, 7; *De Beneficiis*, v, 17; iv, 1.

† Seneca, *Minor Dialogues*, vii, 7; ii, 1; *De Beneficiis*, i, 5.

with a house bright with marble, and its roof beautifully painted with colors and gilding, you would call these benefits. But God has given you the boundless extent of the earth, in which he has buried countless mines, and on which he has placed countless rivers rolling sands of gold. He has concealed in every place masses of silver and all kinds of metals, and has enabled you to discover the hidden treasures. He has built for you a great mansion, in which you see vast blocks of most precious stone, the paltriest fragment of which you admire, and he has covered it with a roof which glitters by day and by night; and yet you do not recognize these blessings of God.*

Present time is short, always in motion, and runs swiftly away. Man can not grasp it; its unceasing movements brook no delay. Duties should be done now. Postponement is the greatest waste of life. It steals our time day after day. It takes away the present by promising something hereafter. "There is no such obstacle to true living as waiting, which loses to-day while it is depending on the morrow."†

Fate decides everything, public and private. The length of every man's life is decided at his

* Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, iv, 5.

† Seneca, *Minor Dialogues*, x, 9, 10.

birth. It has long since been settled at what we should rejoice and at what weep. We must patiently endure the decisions of the fates. God gave laws to the fates, yet is guided by them, and always obeys. "He only once commanded." Our philosopher, however, reconciles all this with the existence and exercise of free-will. He says: "Who can be so crazy as to refuse the name of free-will to that which has no danger of ceasing to act, and of adopting the opposite course, since, on the contrary, he whose will is fixed forever must be thought to wish more earnestly than any one else. Surely, if he who may at any moment change his mind can be said to wish, we must not deny the existence of will in a being whose nature admits of change of mind."*

Seneca generally takes a bright view of the future, and counsels against mourning for the dead. The soul is let out of prison and is free. The dead have reached deep and everlasting peace—beyond the fear of want, beyond anxiety and envy. Their chaste ears are not wounded by ribaldry; they are menaced by no disaster. They are complete, having left no part of themselves behind. They may have tarried for a brief space above us, in order to be cleansed and purified from the vices and rust which all mortal

* Seneca, *Minor Dialogues*, i, 5; *De Beneficiis*, vi, 21.

lives must contract; but from thence they rise to the high heavens and join the souls of the blest, welcomed by a saintly company. "Free to roam through the open, boundless realms of the everlasting universe, they are not hindered in their course by intervening seas, lofty mountains, impassable valleys, or the treacherous flats of the Syrtes. They find a level path everywhere, are swift and ready of motion, and are permeated, in their turn, by the stars, and dwell together with them." *

In the writings of Seneca may be found numerous and striking resemblances to the sacred Scriptures. We can not find, however, that either borrowed from the other. There is not the slightest possibility that Seneca ever had any intercourse with Paul. Several authors have made large collections of passages which show that Seneca, as far as his moral doctrines and precepts are concerned, was not far from the kingdom of heaven. Farrar has presented some of the most striking of these passages, from which we select a few examples.†

"Do you wonder that man goes to the gods? God comes to men; nay, what is yet nearer, he

* Seneca, *Minor Dialogues*, xii, 9; vi, 19, 25.

† Farrar, *Seekers after God*, pp. 174-180.

comes into men. No good mind is holy without God."

"What advantage is it that anything is hidden from men? Nothing is closed to God; he is present to our minds, and enters into our central thoughts."

"Words must be sown like seed; which, although it be small, when it hath found a suitable ground, unfolds its strength, and from very small size is expanded into the largest increase."

"We shall be wise if we desire but little; if each man takes count of himself, and at the same time measures his own body, he will know how little it can contain, and for how short a time."

"You must live for one another, if you wish to live for yourself."

"Do we teach that he should stretch his hand to the shipwrecked, show his path to the wanderer, divide his bread with the hungry? . . . When I could briefly deliver to him the formula of human duty; all this that you see, in which things divine and human are included, is one—we are members of one great body."*

When we consider the age in which Seneca

* Seneca, Letters 73, 83, 38, 114, 48, 95; cf. 1 Cor. iii, 16; Heb. iv, 13; Matt. xiii, 8; 1 Tim. vi, 8; Lev. xix, 18; 1 Cor. xii, 27; Rom. xii, 5.

lived, we must place a high estimate upon the strength and purity of his character. We would not conceal or minify his faults, but we would acknowledge with gratitude his virtues. God certainly endowed him with a large share of divine illumination.

Among the slaves of Epaphroditus, the secretary of the Emperor Nero, Seneca must have noticed a little lame Phrygian lad, Epictetus by name, who was destined to become the most celebrated of the Stoic philosophers. He was born about the fiftieth year of the Christian era. We have little information concerning his life which we may count as historic. He was doubtless treated with great cruelty, yet, for the pleasure of his master, was trained in the Stoic philosophy by Caius Musonius Rufus. The decree of Domitian, which banished all the philosophers from Italy, sent Epictetus to Nicopolis in Epirus. We do not know whether he ever returned to Rome. He is said to have died at a good old age, surrounded by many loving disciples. Epictetus exemplified his philosophy in his life, so far at least as we have any knowledge of his history.

The good man, the perfect man, the wise man, the Stoic lived in harmony with nature; hence it was important to study and understand na-

ture. Virtue consisted in cherishing right opinions. Some things are not within human control—property, health, position, and in fact everything which the great multitude considers desirable. The wise man does not trouble himself about these things. But his thoughts, his opinions, his feelings, are within his control. Concerning these he exercises his utmost care.

Epictetus trusted, with implicit confidence, in the providence of God. God's care would never fail his child. The chief delight of a man should be found in the consciousness that he is obeying God; not in word only, but in deed and in truth, performing the acts of a wise and good man. The human will should perfectly harmonize with the will of God. And in this filial yielding to God, there is no compulsion. Man is free to act from original choice.

“Dare to look up to God, and say: Deal with me for the future as thou wilt; I am of the same mind as thou art; I am thine. I refuse nothing that pleases thee; lead me where thou wilt; clothe me in any dress thou choosest. Is it thy will that I should hold the office of a magistrate, that I should be in the condition of a private man, stay here or be in exile, be poor, be rich?—I will make thy defense to men in behalf of all these conditions.”

“But I have never been hindered in my will, nor compelled when I did not will. And how is this possible? I have placed my movements towards action in obedience to God. Is it his will that I should have fever? It is my will also. Is it his will that I should move towards anything? It is my will also. Is it his will that I should obtain anything? It is my wish also. Does he not will? I do not wish. Is it his will that I die—is it his will that I be put to the rack? It is my will, then, to die—it is my will, then, to be put to the rack. Who, then, is still able to hinder me contrary to my own judgment, or to compel me? No more than he can hinder or compel Zeus.”*

Here is perfect resignation to the will of God; here is the adoption of the divine will as his own. It is not possible to conceal from God our acts, or even our intentions and thoughts. Man should learn the nature of the gods; then he should please and obey them, and with all his power imitate them, and do and say everything consistently with this fact.†

Men are sprung from God in an especial manner. He is their Maker, their Guardian, and their Father. This should save man from sorrows and fears, and from mean and ignoble

* Epictetus, ii, 16; iv, 1.

† Epictetus, ii, 14.

thoughts about himself. He has also placed by every man a guardian—a dæmon, to whom he has committed his care. This guardian never sleeps; this guardian is never deceived. Man is never alone. God and his dæmon are with him, and they need no light to enable them to see what he is doing.*

No evil can happen to the man who carries God within. He fears no robber, no earthquake. Everything is full of peace and tranquillity. Every way, every city, every meeting, every neighbor, every companion, is harmless. When he dies, his body is resolved into its original elements; his spirit goes to God, but whether to be absorbed into the divine essence, or to continue his individual and personal existence, Epictetus does not say.†

Epictetus would stand by his principles, even at the risk of his life. “Priscus Helvidius also saw this, and acted conformably. For when Vespasian sent and commanded him not to go into the Senate, he replied: ‘It is in your power not to allow me to be a member of the Senate; but so long as I am, I must go in.’ ‘Well, go in then,’ says the emperor, ‘but say nothing.’ ‘Do not ask my opinion, and I will be silent.’ ‘But I must ask your opinion.’ ‘And I must

* Epictetus, i, 3, 9, 14; ii, 8.

† Epictetus, iii, 13

say what I think right.' 'But if you do, I shall put you to death.' 'When, then, did I tell you that I am immortal? You will do your part, and I will do mine; it is your part to kill; it is mine to die, but not in fear; yours to banish me, mine to depart without sorrow.'* †

The philosopher found his supreme happiness in praising God—not as a nightingale, not as a swan, but as a rational creature. He says: "I ought to praise God; this is my work. I do it; nor will I desert this post so long as I am allowed to keep it. And I exhort you to join in this same song." ‡

A true Stoic was most difficult to find. Epictetus says that he never saw one—a man who was happy in sickness, in danger, in disgrace, in exile, dying; a man ready to think as God does, ready to be disappointed, blaming neither God nor man, angry at no one, envying no one, jealous of no one; "desirous from a man to become a god, and in this poor mortal body thinking of his fellowship with Zeus." §

It is agreed on the part of all fair-minded men that Epictetus was one of the choicest spirits of antiquity. If in Epictetus we behold a man sustained and exalted in soul by his philos-

* Epictetus, i, 2.

† Epictetus i, 16.

‡ Epictetus ii, 19.

ophy, and winning for himself abiding happiness and an immortality of fame under the humiliations and cruelties of slavery, in Marcus Aurelius we gaze upon an equally noble spectacle—a man almost born to the purple, the greatest ruler of his time, yet humble, gentle, meek, self-forgetful, conscientious, chastened, and virtuous. His was a pure and lofty soul; in him were serenity, sweetness, docility, and a tenderness almost womanly. Never did ancient virtue shine with a milder and softer brilliancy, never was there equal moral delicacy with that displayed in his celebrated “Meditations.” When we appreciate the character of the emperor, when we consider the age in which he lived, we shall be prepared to judge charitably of the part he may have taken in the persecution of the Christians.

His “Meditations,” written as a private diary, and not for the public eye, and hence revealing his innermost heart, has been used as a manual of devotions throughout the Christian Church. He lived as though the breath of eternity were fanning his cheek. He often spoke of the transitory character of all worldly things. He counted the whole world but small and insignificant in comparison with the universe. To live in harmony with nature, to trust God and do his will, and to give one’s self actively to the cause

of humanity,—these he considered the highest duties of man. He built but one temple during his whole reign, and that he dedicated to beneficence.

So familiar are his life and works, that we will satisfy ourselves in writing down a few selections from his thoughts :

“Every moment think steadily as a Roman and a man, to do what thou hast in hand with perfect and simple dignity, and feeling of affection, and freedom, and justice, and to give thyself relief from all other thoughts. And thou wilt give thyself relief if thou dost every act of thy life as if it were thy last, laying aside all carelessness and passionate aversion from the commands of reason, and all hypocrisy and self-love and discontent, with the portion which has been given to thee.”

“Never value anything as profitable to thyself which shall compel thee to break thy promise, to lose thy self-respect, to hate any man, to suspect, to curse, to act the hypocrite, to desire anything which needs walls and curtains.”

“Do not act as if thou wert going to live ten thousand years. Death hangs over thee. While thou livest, while it is in thy power, be good.”

“What, then, is that about which we ought

to employ our serious pains? This one thing: thoughts just, and acts social, and words which never lie, and a disposition which gladly accepts all that happens as necessary, as usual, as flowing from a principle and source of the same kind."

"Constantly regard the universe as one living being, having one substance and one soul."

"But, on the contrary, it is a man's duty to comfort himself, and to wait for the natural dissolution, and not to be vexed at the delay, but to rest in these principles only: the one that nothing will happen to me which is not conformable to the nature of the universe, and the other that it is in my power never to act contrary to my God and *dæmon*; for there is no man who will compel me to this."

"Such as are thy habitual thoughts, such also will be the character of thy mind; for the soul is dyed by the thoughts. Dye it, then, with a continuous series of such thoughts as these: for instance, that where a man can live, there he can live well."

"Whatever any one does or says, I must be good, just as if the gold, or the emerald, or the purple were always saying this: Whatever any one does or says, I must be emerald and keep my color."

“It is peculiar to man to love even those who do wrong. And this happens, if when they do wrong it occurs to thee that they are kinsmen, and that they do wrong through ignorance and unintentionally, and that soon both of you will die; and, above all, that the wrong-doer has done thee no harm, for he has not made thy ruling faculty worse than it was before.”

“Whatever may happen to thee, it was prepared for thee from all eternity.”

“No longer talk at all about the kind of man that a good man ought to be, but be such.”

“Neither in writing nor in reading wilt thou be able to lay down rules for others before thou shalt have first learned to obey rules thyself. Much more is this so in life.”

“Thus, then, with respect to the gods: from what I constantly experience of their power, from this I comprehend that they exist, and I venerate them.”*

These three greatest of Stoics should have made the age in which they lived illustrious. But their teachings were powerless. They spoke for philosophers, not for the great, seething mass of humanity. They taught an imperfect morality, as they themselves were painfully and sadly con-

* Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, *Meditations*, ii, 5; iii, 7; iv, 17, 33, 40; v, 10, 16; vii, 15, 22; x, 5, 16; xi, 20; xii, 28.

scious. It was partial, inadequate to rouse the people from their sluggish indifference, powerless to stir the consciences of the wicked, and content to present a rule supported by no underlying principle. It was without authority, without commanding and awakening power, without divine sanctions, without inspiring motives, without holy comforts, and without well-grounded hopes which reached out into the future. It sounded its appeals, but not with powerful ardor. It could present no faultless example.

The ideal Stoic is an impossibility. Epictetus declared that he had never seen one. That sublime imperturbability, without desires, without passion, without pity, loftily smiling at all hopes and fears, despising sorrow and mourning, with no tears to shed, proud and haughty, selfishly unselfish, almost angry at the very thought of anger, with affected insensibility, with imaginary wisdom—it is not Christian, it is not manly; a perfect Stoic would be sterile, useless, inhuman. This is not like the Christian, who rejoices with them that do rejoice, and weeps with them that do weep.

The Stoic believed in God—and also in gods, planetary, stellar, and other. His God was pantheistic rather than spiritual, and consciously personal and free. Sometimes he seems to have

been the soul of the universe. The Stoic believed in immortality—Seneca seems to have looked forward to a personal existence after death. Epictetus avoids questions concerning a future existence; Marcus Aurelius looks for the dissolution of the body into its elements, and the return of the immaterial part to its original condition. But this is a barren, cold, and comfortless immortality.

Stoicism found no place for repentance and divine forgiveness. There is no place for the indwelling spirit. Indeed there is frequent mention of God with man or within man; but God is of such a nature and character that there is but indifferent resemblance to the Christian doctrine. Sometimes it would appear that man is a part of God or equal with God; nay, is even exalted, in some respects, above God.

In every respect, except as to certain moral precepts, Stoicism and Christianity are separated, each from the other, by an infinite distance.

IV.

The Religion of the Druids.

I.

THE CHIEF OF THE GODS AND THE CULTURE HERO.

THE study of any religion, even the lowest, the most superstitious, and the most barbarous, should be approached with the most profound reverence. No religious rites can be so frivolous and savage, and no religious beliefs can be so poor and beggarly, as not to be placed infinitely above ridicule or contempt. The soil upon which the altar of worship has been erected is holy, and we should tread carefully as we visit the sacred place. Here souls cry out after God; they feel after him if haply they may find him. They may grope in the darkness; but to an honest soul the darkness is not total. There are some few rays of true light. We shall appreciate the religion of Christ the more, the more thoroughly we are acquainted with other religions. We shall feel more sympathy with the heathen, the more carefully we study their thoughts, and mark their honest searchings for the divine.

Great mystery is connected with the religion of ancient Britain and Gaul. The deep, dark forest, the sacred oak and mistletoe, the circular and sky-roofed temple, the learned and influential

priesthood, the sacred rites and symbolism, have excited a curiosity and an interest thus far but poorly gratified. The influence of Druidism is still felt on both continents, in popular tales, traditions and superstitions.

Our knowledge of the religious system of the Druids, as far as we are able to gather any information upon the subject at all, must be derived from ancient Celtic mythologies, venerable traditions, primeval institutions, early superstitions and their survivals in modern times, archæological monuments, and the testimony of classic writers. We shall investigate each of these sources of information, and gather what seems to us most valuable. We may hope to be able to let in some light to relieve the darkness which, after centuries of study, still surrounds the subject.

We shall not attempt a chronological order in our studies. After we have tasted the flavor of Celtic mythology we may read with clearer vision the classic and archæological evidence. There is but little material to assist us in our study of early Celtic mythology, but in its later stages we are rather distracted by its abundance than discouraged by its failure. And then, too, this great mass of material has not been digested; but few scholars having studied it with that thoroughness which the importance of the subject demands.

Omitting many lesser mythologic characters, we shall confine our attention largely to those of the first rank, and select such myths and legends as present them in the clearest light. Perhaps the most fruitful field of all is Ireland, and its literature also may be as ancient. We therefore give this island the leading place in our researches. We may here avail ourselves of the labors of several distinguished Celtic scholars, who, with great enthusiasm and learning, have done much to elucidate a difficult subject.

There are many fabulous legends concerning the settlement of Ireland. Among the legends, we find the mention of four successive colonies. These are the Nemedians, the Firbolgs, the Tuatha Dé Danann, and the Milesians. The Nemedians were expelled by the Fomorians, a band of sea-rovers, and fled from the island in three bodies. Those who went to Britain became Britons; those who went to Thrace returned as Firbolgs; and those who went to the north of Europe returned as the Tuatha Dé Danann. The Milesians are said to have come from the north of Spain. The Tuatha Dé Danann, "the tribes of the goddess Danu," formed the group of divinities believed in by the ancient Goidel. Nuada, who was their king, lost his right arm in one of his conflicts with the savage

Firbolgs and their hideous allies. This blemish made it necessary for him to abdicate his throne. A clever man of his court made him a silver hand; and another man still more clever, endowed it with life and motion. He now, after the space of seven years, resumed his kingly office, and was thereafter known as "Nuada of the Silver Hand." He was a most warlike king, but was represented also in other characters. As Nuada Finnfáil he was the god of light and of the heavens; and as Nuada Necht he was connected with the world of waters. We may compare Nuada in this threefold character with the Greek Zeus, but it must be the primitive Zeus. We call to mind the fact that Zeus also lost his hands—both of them—and we shall learn the story of the Norse god Tyr.

In Welsh we meet with "Lluth of the Silver Hand," who is doubtless the same personage as Nuth. A Welsh name of London is *Caer Lûth*, "Lud's Fort;" and the name also lingers in Ludgate Hill, where the god doubtless had an early shrine.

In the territory of the ancient Silures we meet with inscriptions bearing the name *Nodeus*. He seems to have been a kind of Neptune; and had a temple at Lydney, on the western bank of the Severn. But he was not only the Neptune of the sea, he was also a Mars.

“A small plaque of bronze found on the spot gives us probably a representation of the god himself. The principal figure thereon is a youthful deity crowned with rays like Phœbus; he stands in a chariot drawn by four horses, like the Roman Neptune. On either side the winds are typified by a winged genius floating along, and the rest of the space is left to two Tritons; while a detached piece, probably of the same bronze, represents another Triton, also a fisherman, who has just succeeded in hooking a salmon.”*

There are other Celtic gods which combine the characters of Mars and Jupiter. Among these is Cormac mac Airt, grandson of Conn the Hundred-fighter, who is regarded to have reigned at Tara in the third century. He exceeded all others in munificence, learning, wisdom, magnificence, and military glory. He is said to have been driven from his throne by Fergus the Black-toothed. According to another account, his eye was put out by Ængus of the Poisoned Spear, and this blemish being incompatible with kingship, he abdicated the throne and rendered valuable assistance to his son and successor.

We must also place here Conaire the Great, who met with a most tragic death, “which is brought about by the fairies of Erin, through

* Rhys, Hibbert Lectures, 1886, p. 127.

the instrumentality of outlaws, coming from the sea and following the lead of a sort of Cyclops called Ingcél, said to have been a big, rough, horrid monster, with only one eye, which was, however, wider than an ox-hide, blacker than the back of a beetle, and provided with no less than three pupils."

Conchobar mac Nessa, another similar character, also came to his death in a most extraordinary manner. A ball had been made by mixing the brain of a fallen foe, called Mesgregra, with lime. Cét, another deadly enemy, secured possession of this ball, and hurled it against Conchobar with so accurate an aim as to wound him most grievously in the skull. After some years, this wound caused his death.

Nessa is described as a warlike virago, with whom Fergus mac Róig, king of Ulster, fell in love, but was rejected. Now, this Fergus was endowed with the strength of seven hundred men, and wielded a sword which extended, whenever he used it, to the dimensions of a rainbow. Nessa had, at last, consented to marriage with Fergus, but only on the condition that he should give up the kingdom for one year to her son Conchobar. At the end of the year, so successful had been the administration of the government that the people would not consent to a

change. Fergus attempted to assert his claims by force of arms, but was not successful, and was compelled to flee from the kingdom.

Ængus, much devoted to irresistible music, was the son of Dagda the Great, who is described as old and fond of porridge, and, withal, a good subject for comic treatment, and the goddess Boann, from whom the river Boyne takes its name. As mac Óc, his foster-father, was Mider, the king of the fairies, whose wife was Etain, a dawn-goddess. A rival separated Mider and Etain. Mac Óc found the dawn-goddess, clad in purple, housed in a glass sun-bower, and fed on fragrance and the bloom of odoriferous flowers. Mac Óc seized the bower, and carried it with him whenever he traveled. Ængus, by throwing his magic mantle around her, protected in a similar manner Grainne, daughter of Cormac mac Airt, who declined to wed Finn, king of the fairies and of the dead, and eloped with the solar hero Diarmait.

According to ancient story, the Tuatha Dé Danann were defeated by hostile invaders of their realm, and then withdrew from mortal ken. They retreated into the hills and mounds of Erin, and there formed an invisible world of their own. Hence, in the popular belief, the gods are especially associated with the mounds

and cemeteries of the country. The Brugh of the Boyne was the home of Dagda the Great. This home, however, he lost to his crafty son mac Óc, who was thenceforth known as the Ængus of the Brugh. Tradition represents himself and sons as buried there. The place is described in an old account as most admirable: "There are three trees there, always bearing fruit. There is one pig there, always alive, and another pig always ready cooked; and there is a vessel there, always full of excellent ale." This is the ideal of these old people concerning the happiness of those who dwell in the land of the blessed. There are many myths connected with Ængus, some of which do not yield to explanation, as when we are told that his four kisses were converted into "birds which haunted the youths of Erin."

Among the numerous legends furnished by Irish literature we select one, which we relate with somewhat of detail:

"One night Ængus, the mac Óc, dreamed that he saw at his bedside a maiden the most beautiful in Erin. He made a move to take hold of her; but she vanished, he knew not whither. He remained in his bed till the morning; but he was in an evil plight on account of of the maiden leaving him without vouchsafing him a word, and he tasted no food that day.

The next night the same lovely form appeared again at his bedside, and this time she played on the sweetest of musical instruments. The effect on him was much the same as before, and he fasted that day also. This went on for a whole year, and he became the victim of love; but he told nobody what ailed him. The physicians of Erin were called in, and one of them at length guessed by his face what he was suffering from. He bade his mother, Boann, be sent for to hear her son's confession. She came, and he told her his story. She then sent for the Dagda, his father, to whom she explained that their son was the victim of a wasting sickness arising from unrequited love, which was considered a fatal disease in ancient Erin. The Dagda was in bad humor, and declared he could do nothing, which was promptly contradicted; for he was told that as he was the king of the *Síde*—that is, of the gods and fairies of Erin—he might send word to Bodb the Red, king of the fairies of Munster, to use his great knowledge of the fairy settlements of Erin to discover the maiden that haunted the mac Óc's dreams. Ængus had now been ill two years, and Bodb required a year for the search; but he proved successful before the year was out. So he came with the news to the Dagda, and took the mac Óc to see if he could

recognize the lady. The mac Óc did so the moment he descried her, among her thrice fifty maiden companions. These, we are told, were joined two and two together by silver chains, and their mistress towered head and shoulders above the rest. Her name was Caerabar, or, more shortly, Caer, daughter of Etal Anbuar, of the fairy settlement of Naman, in the land of Connaught. She wore a silver collar around her neck and a chain of burnished gold. Ængus was grieved that he had not the power to take her away, so he returned home; and the Dagda was advised to seek the aid of Ailill and Medb, the king and queen of the western kingdom. But Caer's father declining to answer the summons that he should appear before them, an attack was made on his residence, when he himself was taken, and brought before Ailill and Medb. He then explained to them that he had no power over his daughter, who, with her companions, changed their forms every other year into those of birds. In fact, he added that on the first day of the ensuing winter they would appear as one hundred and fifty swans on *Loch bel draccon oc-cruit cliach*, or the Lake of the Mouths of the Dragons, near Cliach's Crowd. Peace was accordingly made with Etal, and Ængus betook him to the shore of the lake on the day mentioned.

Recognizing *Caer* in the form of a swan, he called to her and said: 'Come to speak to me, *Caer*.' 'Who calls me?' was the reply. '*Ængus* calls thee,' he said. 'I will come,' said she, 'provided I obtain that thou wilt on thy honor make for the lake after me.' 'I will,' said he. She accordingly came to him, whereupon he placed his two hands on her. Then they flew off in the form of a pair of swans, and they went thrice round the lake. They afterward took their flight to the *Brugh* of the *Boyne*, where they made such enchanting music that it plunged everybody in a deep sleep, which lasted three days and three nights. *Caer* remained at the *Brugh* of the *Boyne* as the *mac Óc*'s consort."*

This is doubtless the original of the Welsh saga called the *Dream of Maxen*. The following is an abstract:

"*Maxen* was emperor of Rome, and the handsomest of men, as well as the wisest, with whom none of his predecessors might compare. One day he and his courtiers went forth to hunt, and in the course of the day he sat himself down to rest, while his chamberlains protected him from the scorching rays of the sun with their shields. Beneath that shelter he slept, and he dreamt that he was traveling over hill and dale, across

* *Rhys*, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1886, pp. 169-171.

rich lands and fine countries, until at length he reached a sea-coast. Then he crossed the sea in a magnificent ship, and landed in a great city in an island, which he traversed from the one shore till he was in sight of the other; there we find him in a district remarkable for its precipitous mountains and lofty cliffs, from which he could descry an isle in front of him, surrounded by the sea. He stayed not his course until he reached the mouth of a river, where he found a castle with open gates. He walked in, and there beheld a fair hall, built of stones precious and brilliant, and roofed with shingles of gold. To pass by a great deal more gold and silver and other precious things, Maxen found in the hall four persons; namely, two youths, playing at chess. They were the sons of the lord of the castle, who was a venerable, gray-haired man, sitting in an ivory chair adorned with the images of two eagles of ruddy gold. He had bracelets of gold on his arms, and many a ring glittered on his fingers; a massive gold torque adorned his neck, while a frontlet of the same precious metal served to restrain his locks. Hard by sat his daughter, in a chair of ruddy gold, and her beauty was so transcendent that it would be no more easy to look at her face than to gaze on the sun when his rays are most irresistible.

She was clad in white silk, fastened on her breast with brooches of ruddy gold, and over it she wore a surcoat of golden satin, while her head was adorned with a golden frontlet set with rubies and gems, alternating with pearls and imperial stones. The narrator closes his description of the damsel by giving her a girdle of gold, and by declaring her altogether the fairest of the race. She rose to meet Maxen, who embraced her, and sat with her in her chair. At this point the dream was suddenly broken off by the restlessness of the horses and the hounds and the creaking of the shields rubbing against each other, which woke the emperor a bewildered man. Reluctantly and sadly he moved, at the advice of his men, towards home; for he could think of nothing but the fair maiden in gold. In fact there was no joint in his body, or even as much as the hollow of one of his nails, which had not become charged with her love. When his courtiers sat at table to eat or drink, he would not join them, and when they went to hear song and entertainment, he would not go; or, in a word, do anything for a whole week but sleep as often as the maiden slept, whom he beheld in his dreams. When he was awake she was not present to him, nor had he any idea where in the world she was. This went on till at last one

of his nobles contrived to let him know that his conduct, in neglecting his men and his duties, was the cause of growing discontent. Thereupon he summoned before him the wise men of Rome, and told them the state of mind in which he was. Their advice was that messengers should be sent on a three years' quest to the three parts of the world, as they calculated that the expectation of good news would help to sustain him. But at the end of the first year the messengers returned unsuccessful, which made Maxen sad; so other messengers were sent forth to search another third of the world. They returned at the end of their year, like the others, unsuccessful. Maxen, now in despair, took the advice of one of his courtiers, and resorted to the forest where he had first dreamt of the maiden. When the glade was reached, he was able to give his messengers a start in the right direction. They went on and on, identifying the country they traversed with the emperor's description of his march day by day, until at last they reached the rugged district of Snowdon, and beheld Mona lying in front of them flat in the sea. They proceeded a little further, and entered a castle where Caernarvon now stands, and there beheld the hall roofed with gold; they walked in, and found Kynan and Adeon playing

at chess, while their father, Eudav, son of Karadawg, sat in his chair of ivory, with his daughter Elen seated near him. They saluted her as empress of Rome, and proceeded to explain the meaning of an act she deemed so strange. She listened courteously, but declined to go with them, thinking it more appropriate that the emperor should come in person to fetch her. In due time he reached Britain, which he conquered from Beli the Great and his sons; then he proceeded to visit Elen and her father, and it was during his stay here, after the marriage, that Elen had Caermarthen built, and the stronghold in Eryri. The story adds Caerleon to them, but distinguishes the unnamed Snowdon city as the favorite abode of her and her husband. The next she undertook was to employ the hosts at her command in the construction of roads between the three towns which she had caused to be built in part payment of her maiden-fee. But Maxen remained here so many years that the Romans made an emperor in his stead. So at length he and Elen, and her two brothers and their hosts, set out for Rome, which they had to besiege and take by storm. Maxen was now reinstated in power, and he allowed his brothers-in-law and their hosts to settle wherever they chose; so Adeon and his men came back to Britain, while

Kynan and his reduced Brittany, and settled there.”*

The original of Maxen was probably Merlin Emrys, who seems to have conquered the country from the Chthonian god, Beli the Great. Elen is evidently the dawn-goddess. Caer, with her one hundred and fifty companions with their silver chains, may explain the name of the goddess in the other story—Elen Lüyddawg, “Elen of the Host.” The attendants may be an exaggeration of the number of priestesses who were supposed to have presided at her altars. The virgin priestesses of the Isle of Sein, according to Pomponius Mela, could take any form they chose. Sometimes they are merely birds, and sometimes they are designated as swans. The Welsh, in corresponding superstitions, prefer the goose, and treat those who assume this form as witches. “It was an evil omen to see geese on a lake at night,” especially if this were the first Thursday night of the lunar month.†

There is a story that Zeus spent a part of his childhood on the summit of one of the Lycæan mountains in Arcadia, and that there, once upon a time, one of the kings sacrificed his child upon his altar. On the same mountain was a sacred

* Rhys, Hibbert Lectures, 1886, pp. 162-165.

† Rhys, Hibbert Lectures, 1886, pp. 168-175.

spring, and when the water of this holy well was touched by a priest with a branch of an oak, a refreshing shower was sure to bless the thirsty land. The Fountain of Baranton in the forest of Breilien is equally famous. When the people of the country wanted rain, they would go to this fountain and pour the contents of a tankard filled with its waters upon a slab near at hand, and their wish would be gratified. At the present day, in seasons of drought, the people of the surrounding parishes go to this well in procession, their priests ringing bells and chanting hymns; upon arrival at the sacred spot, the priest of the canton dips the foot of the cross in the water, and rain is sure to follow within a week.

There lies in Snowdon Mountain a lake called Dulyn, in a dismal dingle surrounded by high and dangerous rocks; the lake is exceedingly black, and its fish are loathsome, having large heads and small bodies. No wild swan, or duck, or any kind of bird has ever been seen to light on it, as is their wont on every other Snowdonian lake. In this same lake there is a row of stepping-stones, extending into it; and if any one steps on the stones, and throws water so as to wet the furthest stone of the series, which is called the Red Altar, it is but a chance that you do not get rain before night, even in hot weather.

Diarmait and Finn mac Cumail were searching for some of the men of the latter, whom a wizard chief had carried away. They sailed far toward the west till they came to a steep cliff, which seemed to reach to the clouds. With incredible difficulty and danger, Diarmait alone surmounted the cliff, and saw spread before him a beautiful plain, bordered with pleasant hills, shaded by leafy groves, and sweet with lovely flowers. Birds warbled among the trees, bees were busy among the flowers, winds whispered through the foliage, and streams purred and gurgled as they pursued their course through green fields. Walking out into the plain, he saw straight before him a tree overtopping all the others, laden with much fruit. Near the tree stood a pillar-stone, which was surrounded at a little distance by a circle of other pillar-stones. Near the central stone was a spring, where water clear as crystal flowed away towards the middle of the plain. He stooped to drink; but before his lips touched the water he was startled by the noise of the heavy tramp of soldiers and the clank of their arms. He sprang to his feet, and looked around, but saw nothing. A second time he stooped to drink, with the same result. While he stood wondering, he saw on the top of the pillar-stone a most beautiful drinking-horn chased with

gold and enameled with precious stones. He took the horn, filled it with water, and slaked his thirst. Scarcely had he taken it from his lips when he saw a gruagach coming from the east with great strides and full of wrath. He was clad in mail complete, armed with shield and helmet, and sword and spear, and wore a beautiful scarlet mantle hung over his armor and fastened at his throat with a golden brooch, while a circlet of ruddy gold confined his yellow hair. The gruagach said, with angry voice, that he thought the green plains of Erin, with the sweet water of their crystal springs, ought to have satisfied Diarmait, so that he need not have invaded his island, and drunk from his well in his drinking-horn without permission; and he furthermore declared that he should never leave the spot till he had paid full satisfaction for the insult. They fought all day, and at its close the gruagach leaped into the well and disappeared from sight. Diarmait now went toward the end of the great forest, and killed one of a herd of speckled deer, a portion of the flesh of which, together with water from the fountain, formed his supper. He slept soundly, and prepared a similar breakfast. But the gruagach awaited him at the well, still more angered at him for a double insult—he had also killed one of his deer. They fought the sec-

ond day, and at its close the gruagach again leaped into the spring and disappeared. On the third day they met with the same history. But at the end of the fourth day Diarmait threw his arms around his antagonist, and they both disappeared in the well together. They reached the "Land Beneath the Billow," where the gruagach disengaged himself and escaped, and Diarmait was left alone. Here he met with the brother of his strange antagonist, who had been disinterested. Forming an alliance with this brother, he made war on the gruagach, or Knight of the Fountain, who was ultimately defeated and slain.*

The stones which fill a prominent place in some of these legendary tales may have originally represented the deities especially honored. We may recall the account which relates that Merlin advised those who consulted him as to the matter of building Stonehenge to bring the pillar-stones, called the "Choir of the Giants," from the place where they stood at Killarans Mons, in Ireland, and set them up in the same order. They were considered to have been possessed of various virtues, especially of the virtue of healing. The giants of old had cured grievous maladies by washing their patients with the water with which

* Rhys, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1886, pp. 187-190.



these stones had first been bathed; or, again, they made application of certain medicinal herbs which had first been dipped in the same holy bath. Thus, according to ancient story, Stonehenge came into existence. The site of this circle of sacred stones in Ireland was perhaps at Usnech, in the county of Westmeath. St. Patrick cursed the sacred stones of Usnech on account of the heathen worship which was performed in the holy place. It is related in like manner that St. David split the capstone of the Mæn Ketti cromlech in Gower, to prove to the people that it was not divine.

The hero of these various tales can be no other than the Celtic Zeus. In his early history he was the god of light and of the sun. In his later stages of development, by expansion of his nature and multiplication of his attributes, he became the god of the sky and of heaven, the god of thunder and of rain, and the god of the sea and of all waters. Hence, holy wells with their worship were, in many cases at least, originally connected with this Celtic Zeus. And, the god of the light and of the sun—and generally of all the bright powers of nature—he fought against the demons of darkness. He was enamored of the goddesses of the dawn, the morning dew, the spring-time, and the flowers. He frequently res-

cued them from imprisonment, enchantment, and tyrannical rule. As the god of fountains and all waters, he marshaled the clouds swollen with fertilizing rains, and bade them drop their treasures upon the earth, defeated the giants who possessed the fountains, and controlled for the good of mortals the refreshing streams and summer showers. In an ethical sense the Celtic Zeus fights against moral darkness and the giants of evil, and is the source of all spiritual light and blessings.

At midsummer, May first, the Druids are said to have caused all fires to be extinguished, and then rekindled from the sacred fire, which they never permitted to go out. These fires were kept burning by Christian priests long after the old religion had passed away. In 1220, Loundres, Archbishop of Dublin, extinguished the sacred fire kept near the church of Kildare, but it was afterward rekindled, and continued to burn till the suppression of the monasteries. The sacred fire was presided over by St. Brigit, and attended by virgins. The Beltane was kindled on Midsummer-eve, All-hallow-e'en, and Christmas. Conspicuous places made it visible to multitudes of eyes. In the north of England on Midsummer-eve, bonfires were lighted by corporate authority in all market-places. At Callander, in

Perthshire, the ashes left from the burning of the Beltane were collected, and a circle formed therewith, near the circumference of which a stone was placed for every person who took part in the bonfire. If a stone were removed from its place before morning, it was believed that the person whom it represented would die within one year.*

In some parts of Scotland, about the beginning of the present century, the festival is described as follows: "The young people of a hamlet meet in the moors on the first of May. They cut a table in the green sod, of a round figure, by cutting a trench in the ground of such circumference as to hold the whole company. They then kindle a fire, and dress a repast of eggs and milk in the consistence of a custard. They knead a cake of oatmeal, which is toasted at the embers against a stone. After the custard is eaten up, they divide the cake in so many portions, as similar as possible to one another, in size and shape, as there are persons in the company. They daub one of these portions with charcoal until it is perfectly black. They then put all the bits of the cake into a bonnet, and every one, blindfold, draws out a portion. The bonnet-holder is entitled to the last bit. Who-

* *Anthropological Review*, 1886, Vol. IV, p. 346.

ever draws the black bit is the devoted person who is to be sacrificed to Beal, whose favor they mean to implore in rendering the year productive. The devoted person is compelled to leap three times over the flames."

In England similar observances have been described: "At the village of Holne, situated on one of the spurs of Dartmoor, is a field of about two acres, the property of the parish, and called the ploy (play) field. In the center of this stands a granite pillar (Menhir) six or seven feet high. On May morning, before daybreak, the young men of the village assemble there, and then proceed to the moor, where they select a ram lamb (doubtless with the consent of the owner), and, after running it down, bring it in triumph to the ploy-field, fasten it to the pillar, cut its throat, and then roast it whole, skin, wool, etc. At midday a struggle takes place, at the risk of cut hands, for a slice, it being supposed to confer luck for the ensuing year on the fortunate devourer. As an act of gallantry, in high esteem among the females, the young men sometimes fight their way through the crowd to get a slice for their chosen among the young women, all of whom, in their best dresses, attend the *ram-feast*, as it is called. Dancing, wrestling, and other games, assisted by copious libations of

cider during the afternoon, prolong the festivities till midnight."

As late as 1795 fires were lighted at midnight in Ireland in honor of the sun. According to Spencer, the Irish are accustomed to say a prayer whenever they light a fire. On days sacred to the sun, offerings of milk were presented on the *gruagach*-stone found in every village.

In Scotland there was a practice, described by an eye-witness, that after a child was baptized, and on the return of the party from the church, the infant was swayed three times gently over a flame; or, according to another authority, the child was handed three times across the fire. In Perthshire, in cases of private baptism, there was a custom of passing the child three times around the crook which was suspended over the center of the fire."*

As a religious duty, the Highlanders walk round their fields and flocks with some burning substance in their right hand.† In Cornwall we find the same custom, and the torch is carried with the course of the sun. When disease invaded a flock, the cattle were forced to pass through a fire, and sometimes a calf was burned as an offering. There are holy wells in Cornwall,

* *Anthropological Review*, 1886, Vol. IV, p. 346.

† Logan, *The Scottish Gael*, pp. 453, 454.

at which wonderful cures are believed to have been performed; but the superstitious rites have also reference to the motion of the sun. A sick child is dipped into the water three times, but it must be against the direction of the sun's motion; and the child is passed around the well nine times, but now it must be in the same direction with the motion of the sun. It was deemed unlucky to do such work in any other way. Pans of milk should not be skimmed in an order against the sun's course, and cream must not be stirred against the sun. But, on the other hand, to "back" a disease, the motion must be against the sun. Young children are passed through the Men-an-tol—"crick-stones," or hold-stones—against the sun nine times, to cure various diseases. Sometimes a bonfire is kindled on these stones, and danced around at midsummer. On the first Wednesday after midsummer the waters of holy wells are considered especially virtuous. Those guilty of petty offenses may be discovered by means of a fire kindled on a holy stone. A stick is lighted, and the person who can not put out the fire of the burning stick by spitting on it is held to be the guilty one.* At Evreux, in 1683, bodies of dead were exhumed,

* Bottrell, *Traditions and Hearthside Stories of West Cornwall*, Second Series, pp. 76, 240, 241, 201, 242, 283.

and found with their faces turned to the midday sun.*

Such are some of the survivals of the worship of the old Celtic god.

The stones of the circle seem to have been replaced by the images of the gods which they represented. In a life of St. Patrick we read the following legend :

“Thereafter went Patrick over the water to Mag Slecht, a place wherein was the chief idol of Ireland—to-wit, Cenn Cruaich—covered with gold and silver, and twelve other idols about it, covered with brass. When Patrick saw the idol from the water, whose name is *Guth-ard* (*i. e.* elevated its voice), and when he drew nigh unto the idol, he raised his hand to put Jesus’s crozier upon it, and did not reach it; but it bowed westward to turn on its right side, for its face was from the South; to-wit, to Tara. And the trace of the crozier abides on its left side still, and yet the crozier moved not from Patrick’s hand. And the earth swallowed the twelve other images as far as their heads, and they are thus in sign of the miracle, and he cursed the demon, and banished him to hell.”†

In the Book of Leinster we find it stated

* Logan, *The Scottish Gael*, p. 479.

† Rhys, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1886, pp. 200, 201.

that the ancient Irish, in this place, used to sacrifice the first-born of their children and of their flocks to secure peace and power, milk and corn.

The worship of this idol prevailed in the center of Britain. Cenn Cruaich, or "Chief of the Mound," has its etymological equivalent in the modern Welsh Pen Crûg, which, in the Itinerary of Antoninus, has become Pennocrucium; perhaps the same as the Penkridge in Staffordshire—written Pencrik in a charter of Æthilheard of Wessex, of the eighth century. Such spots mark not only worship in high places, but also courts of justice and parliamentary gatherings. A modern survival is the Eistethvod, held in the interest of music and letters. As late as 1380, Alexander Steward held a court in the temple of the Rath of Kingusie. Perhaps it was from this custom that the Moot-hills originated. Courts were held in churches till prohibited by law.

When Conn the Hundred-fighter was ascending the gorsedd of Tara, he chanced to tread on a certain stone, which thereupon screamed so loudly as to be heard all over the land. Then followed a thick fog, and out of the fog rode a fairy, who conducted Conn to his residence, and related to him the future history of Ireland.

This stone, called "the Stone of Fál," was one of the four precious things brought to Ireland by the Tuatha Dé Danann. One of its remarkable properties was that, wherever it was placed, it secured the sovereignty of the country to a Goidel of Milesian descent. While it remained at Tara, it recognized every king by a scream. This stone has been traced from Tara to Scone, the capital of the kingdom of Alban. Edward I brought it to London, where it now rests in the coronation chair in Westminster Abbey. Irish and Scotch historians believe that the Stuarts are descended from Goidelic ancestors of the Milesian race. Thus prophecy has not failed. Since Fál was the old god of light and of the sun, this stone must have originally been connected with such worship.

The gorsedd, or court, of the Eistethvod is held within a circle of stones, which has been formed for the purpose, with a larger stone in the middle. According to rule, it is held "in a conspicuous place, within sight and hearing of the country and the lord in authority, and face to face with the sun and the eye of light, as there is no power to hold a gorseth under cover or at night, but only where and as long as the sun is visible in the heavens." The prayer pronounced at the opening of the session by the

officiating Druid, according to one account, runs as follows :

“ O God, grant strength ;
And from strength, discretion ;
And from discretion, knowledge ;
And from knowledge, the right ;
And from the right, the love of it ;
And from that love, love for all things ;
And in love for all things, the love of God ! ”

This would seem to be but a continuation of the old worship of the Celtic Zeus.*

“ A species of divination is still practiced in Arthurstone by the neighboring rustic maidens, who have little idea that they are perpetuating (perverted, indeed, in its object) the rites of Druidism and the mysteries of Eleusis in their propitiatory offering. At midnight of the full moon, if a maiden deposit in *the sacred well beneath* a cake of milk, honey, and barley meal, and then on hands and knees crawl three times round the cromlech, she will see, if ‘ fancy free,’ the vision of her future lord. If her affections are engaged, the form of the favored youth will stand before her, fearfully bound to answer truly her questions as to his sincerity.” This custom was preserved until within a few years.

The acts of Christian councils prove the prev-

* Rhys, Hibbert Lectures, 1886, pp. 208-210.

alence of the former belief in the sacred stones. A council held in 681 warns the adorers of idols, worshipers of stones, and those who light torches in honor of sacred trees and fountains. The laws of Canute prohibit the worship of sun and moon, rocks and fountains. In Brittany two parties covenant together by clasping hands through perforated stones.

Some of the ancient sacred inclosures were of great extent. The temple of Abury, in Wiltshire, contained more than twenty-eight acres. It was surrounded by a ditch; and its rampart was seventy-five feet high, measured from the bottom of the ditch. Two avenues were connected with the temple, and in the temple and its avenues six hundred and fifty stones were used. Some of the stones were of great size—one of these was twenty-one feet high and eight feet nine inches in breadth. The temple at Carnac, in Brittany, was a remarkable structure, extending five or six miles. There are eleven rows of stones, forming ten avenues, and resembling a huge serpent. There must have been originally about ten thousand stones. Tradition says that, at midsummer of each year, a stone was added, so that the age of the world was represented. Near this place, at a May-day feast, three hundred unarmed British nobles were

treacherously slain by the followers of Hengist. From the time of the commission of this bloody crime, on every May-day night, the shriek of the dragon of Britain is heard over every hearth as it contends with the dragon of a foreign foe.



DRUIDICAL STONES, CARNAC, BRITTANY.

The literature of folk-lore is becoming extensive. Enthusiastic authors connect all fairy tales, all superstitions, and all customs with early religious beliefs and practices. That this is the true account of the origin of the largest portion of the material we can not doubt, yet we may well hesitate before the adoption of the rule as one of universal application. We can not but think that something must be left to pure and deliberate inventiveness, playfulness, and mischievousness.

The frolicsomeness of children and the idle activity of youth and manhood, may do something with no ulterior object beyond temporary amusement. We happen to have known extemporized plays which might be wonderfully connected with old superstitions and primitive religious doctrines.

It would require volumes to record all the customs similar to those given above. They are not peculiar to Druidism, but belong to the whole human race. Their meaning is not exhausted when we refer them to sun-worship. Many have little reference to this; many more point to magic, witchcraft, and other superstitions which so thoroughly dominated the primitive mind. There was a multitude of charms to drive away evil spirits, secure fruitful seasons, and insure the enjoyment of health. The interested reader who desires to pursue this subject further should consult those larger works in which it receives special treatment.

All these rites, traditions, and customs, doubtless point to the same early god. He is not the most primitive Celtic Zeus, though possessing certain characteristics of the god of light and of the sun, but the later expansion of the god of the sky and of rain. He had his altars and temples, his sacred trees and holy wells, and was wor-

shipped in high places. His idol was surrounded by the idols of other gods, who waited upon him as servants. Frequently the sacred tree overshadowing the holy well bore on its branches bits of rags and other trifles placed there as offerings by enthusiastic devotees. Sometimes modern coins are found among the gifts, showing the persistent life of the superstition.

But a new god of light, Lug by name, was coming into notice. He was the fairy who had prophesied to Conn the Hundred-fighter the history of Ireland.

The Goidelic god of Druidism to whom the oak was sacred had his Welsh counterpart in Math the Ancient. He was able, like the Welsh fairies and demons, to hear every sound of speech which ever reached the air. He was the first of magicians, and ranked even above Merlin and the mac Óc. He was also the highest ideal of justice and equity associated with the heathenism of Wales. He taught the arts to Gwydion, son of Dôn, the Welsh culture hero, with whose aid he created a woman out of flowers.

Gwydion was a great warrior and a consummate magician. He was also the god of wisdom and eloquence, and a much traveled personage, who presided over ways and paths. The Celts believed that the blessings which they enjoyed

came from their ancestors—in other words, from the nether world. The culture hero, under various names, resorted again and again to the world of spirits, and, either by force or by craft, succeeded in possessing himself of many desirable gifts, which he brought to the people, and taught them to avail themselves of their useful properties. Various domestic animals were procured in this manner. The cauldron of the King of Hades was one of the most priceless of these treasures. It inspired men with that skill in music and poetry which has led to high triumphs.

We present a tale as the representative of the rich literature which has gathered about this part of our subject.

Kei, son of Kynyr; Owein, son of Urien; Kynon, son of Klydno, and other knights of Arthur's Court, were sitting together and entertaining one another with stories. When Kynon's turn came, he related the following:

When he was a young man, and traveling abroad to satisfy his curiosity and gratify his love of adventure, he came to a stately castle in a fine valley where he was most hospitably received. After he had been refreshed, the lord of the castle asked concerning his name, country, and the object of his visit. He told his host truly, and was informed in reply that were it

not for getting him into trouble, he could direct him to a place where he would doubtless find more adventure than he wanted. This served only to excite his curiosity, and make him more anxious and restless. At last he prevailed upon his host to tell what the adventure was to which he referred. He told him to return to the forest through which he had just passed, and proceed until he found a road turning to his right. Following this road he would come to a large, open field, in which he would find a mound, and on the top of this mound he would behold a black man sitting, as large as any two men of this world. He has but one foot, and but one eye, and that is in the middle of his forehead—a very Polyphemus, indeed. His staff would make a load for any two men of the world. He is the keeper of the forest, and a thousand wild beasts graze about him, all obedient to his will. This black man would be able to give the adventurer further directions.

Early the next morning Kynon set out on his journey, and found all as his host had told him, except the black man seemed far bigger, his staff a full load for four men, and three times as many wild beasts grazing about him, all docile and obedient. Kynon asked him concerning his power over the wild animals. "I will show it thee, lit-

tle man," said he; and with his great iron staff he struck a blow at a stag, at whose bell there gathered upon the plain beasts, vipers, and serpents as numerous as the stars of the sky. The black man then told them to graze, when they all lowered their heads in obeisance to their lord. Kynon then inquired his way to the adventure which he sought, and was told :

"Take the road at the end, and proceed uphill until thou reachest the top. From there thou wilt behold a strath resembling a large valley, and in the middle of the strath thou wilt see a large tree, whose foliage is greener than the greenest fir-tree. Beneath that tree there is a fountain; close to the fountain there is a marble slab; and on the marble slab there is a silver tankard, fastened by a silver chain, so that they can not be separated. Take the tankard and throw it, full of the water, over the slab. Then thou wilt hear a great thunder, and it will seem to thee to make earth and sky tremble. After the thunder will come a cold shower, and with difficulty wilt thou live through the shower. It will be one of hail, and afterward the weather will be fair again; but thou wilt not find a single leaf left on the tree by the shower. Then a flight of birds will come and light on the tree. Thou hast never heard in thy country such good music as they

will make; but when the music is most entertaining, thou wilt hear a sighing and a wailing coming along the valley toward thee. Thereupon thou wilt behold on a jet-black charger a knight clad in jet-black satin, with a flag of jet-black silk on his spear, making for thee as fast as he can. In case thou fleest, he will overtake thee; and in case thou awaitest him, he will leave thee a pedestrian instead of a rider. Shouldst thou not find trouble there, thou needest not seek any as long as thou livest."

Kynon followed the directions of the black man, and everything which he had said came to pass. The Black Knight overthrew him, and took away his horse, and he was obliged to trudge back on foot to meet the mockery of the black fellow under whose direction he had gone forth in quest of this adventure.

This story stirred up Owein, son of Urien, to try a duel with the Black Knight of the Fountain. He slipped away from the court, and followed in the track of Kynon, met with the same adventures by the way, and fought with the Black Knight, but succeeded in giving him a mortal wound. Thereupon the knight turned and fled to his castle. He was admitted, and Owein pursued so closely that he was caught between two heavy doors, one of which was let

down behind so as to cut his horse in two close to his spurs. While in this sad plight, he saw, through a crevice, an auburn-haired, curly-headed maiden, with a diadem of gold on her head, coming toward the gate. She asked him to open the gate. He said that he would be only too glad to comply with her request if he were able.

This maiden was Elunet, a dear friend of the Black Knight's wife, and she proved herself also a true friend of Owein. She praised his gallantry, and gave him a ring which would render him invisible, and enable him to escape from the men whom the Black Knight would send to lead him to execution. Owein was successfully concealed till after the funeral of his antagonist. Now, it happened that no one could hold the dominions of the Black Knight who could not hold the fountain, and no one could hold the fountain except some of King Arthur's knights. Elunet pretended to go to his court to obtain a knight, but her absence was so brief that the widow detected a deceit. She obtained the confession that Owein had killed her husband, and this proved that, of all men, he was most fitted to hold the fountain. He married the widow, and remained with her three years.

But Arthur's longing for Owein was so great that at last he and his knights set out in quest

of the missing hero. They found him at the fountain, and were feasted at his castle three months. They then departed, taking with them Owein. His wife was told that he would be absent three months; but when again among his old companions he quite forgot his wife, and the three months became three years. A strange maiden now appeared, riding on a horse caparisoned with gold, who went straight up to Owein, took the ring from his hand, and said: "Thus is done to a deceiver, a false traitor, for a disgrace to thy beard." She then rode away, and Owein, coming to himself, thought of his adventure at the fountain. He became sad, and, leaving the society of men, lived with the wild beasts of the field and forest. In the course of this unnatural life he rescued a lion from a serpent, and thenceforth this king of beasts became his life-long friend. At last Elunet, or Lunet, succeeded in uniting him again with his wife. He brought her to Arthur's court, and she was his wife as long as he lived.*

The normal legend of the Celtic culture god represents him as procuring, as the reward of each adventure, but one, or, at the most, but a limited number of treasures from the world whither the fathers have gone. A few legends,

* Rhys, Hibbert Lectures, 1886, pp. 347-353.

like that related above, make him slay the king of Hades and marry his widow, thus gaining control of the whole, with all its priceless gifts, and making them available for the use of man.

II.

THE SUN-GOD.

ARIONRHOD, the niece of Mâth, and the mistress of Gwydion, became the mother of twin boys. The one, named Dylan, as soon as he was christened, made for the waters, and could at once swim as easily as a fish. We know nothing more about him, except that his death was caused by a blow dealt by his uncle, Govannon, son of Dôn.

The other son was brought up by Gwydion, and while he was yet in his boyhood he was taken to visit his mother, who had never seen him since his birth. She was enraged to learn that his father had spared his life, and laid him under a stern destiny that he never should receive a name till she herself gave him one, and this she resolutely determined never to do.

Now Gwydion, by the use of magic arts, in which he was a consummate master, converted some sedges and sea-weeds into a full-rigged ship, and at the same time converted himself and the lad into cordwainers. They sailed forth, and moored their vessel beneath Arionrhod's castle, where they busily plied their trade, in which they used only the most excellent Cordo-

van leather which had ever been seen. Arionrhod heard of the excellent work of the strangers, and sent an order for a pair of shoes. The shoes were made and brought to her, but found to be too large. Another pair was ordered, but they were too small. By request of the cordwainers, Arionrhod repaired to the ship in person, that they might take her measure. Just then a wren chanced to light on the ship, and the lad took aim so accurately that he hit the bird. Arionrhod, pleased at his cleverness, laughed aloud, and said that it was with a steady hand that the lion hit the wren—Llawgyffes Llew hit the wren. Gwydion, now well-pleased, declared that such should thenceforth be the lad's name. The magic ship immediately returned to its former elements, and Arionrhod saw that she had been outdone. She now put him under another destiny, that he never should wear arms till she herself put them on him, and this she resolved that she would never do.

Some years after this event, Llew and his father presented themselves at Arionrhod's gate as bards from South Wales. They received a right hearty welcome, as was becoming to their office, and enjoyed much good cheer. Early the next morning the whole country was seen to be in commotion—the sea was full of ships, and

warriors in full armor were landing in all directions. This, too, was the effect of the magic of Gwydion; but she, though always determined to be on her guard, did not suspect the illusion. By Gwydion's advice, she caused the castle gates to be secured, and arms to be brought for the two bards. In fear and haste her handmaid helped Gwydion to put on his arms, while she herself helped Llew to arm himself. When they were fully armed and prepared to defend the castle, the hostile fleet and forces suddenly disappeared. She saw that she had again been deceived, and her anger was greater than on either former occasion. She put the young man under the awful destiny that he should never have a wife of the race then inhabiting the earth. But Gwydion and his uncle Mâth were equal to the emergency, and fashioned a woman out of flowers, and called her Blodened. This woman was the fairest in the world, and became the wife of Llew. So the young man had escaped the effects of the three curses.

But Blodened, after some years, became faithless, and by the advice of her paramour questioned Llew as to how he could be killed, for she well knew that there was some wonderful secret connected with his life. He told her, and told her truly—like Samson of old—that if a

bath were prepared for him, and placed in the open air under a thatched roof, and if he stood with one foot on the side of the bath and the other foot on the back of a he-goat, any wound which he might receive while standing in that position would be mortal. She now persuaded him, just to satisfy her innocent curiosity, to assume the position which he had described; and while he was standing in that fatal position, her lover cast a spear and inflicted a wound. Llew uttered an unearthly scream, and flew off in the form of an eagle. But Gwydion was able to find him, and healed the wound. The guilty paramour of his faithless wife was slain, and Blodened was changed into the form of an owl.

The story is not difficult to understand. Llew was the god of the sun, and Blodened was the goddess of the bright dawn. But the dawn has relations not only to light, but also to darkness. When she became unfaithful to Llew, he slew her paramour; and Gwydion pursued her—as one account relates the tale—across the face of the sky, overtook her in the shades of the Western cliffs, and transformed her into a bird of night.

The original name of this sun-god was doubtless not Llew, but rather Lleu, which may be taken to mean light. This god is also related to

the Irish Lug, and we may now compare the account of Lug's birth.

Once upon a time there lived on the coast of Donegal, opposite Tory Island, three brothers, whose names were Gavida, MacSamthainn, and MacKineely. Gavida was a distinguished smith, and MacKineely was the lord of the surrounding district. The latter owned a valuable gray cow, and to steal this cow many attempts had been made. At the same time Tory Island was the headquarters of Balor, a most notorious robber. He had one eye in the middle of his forehead, and another in the back of his head. Since the venomous rays of this latter eye would strike one dead, he usually kept it covered. The Druid who was his attendant and priest, revealed to him the destiny that he should die at the hand of his own grandson. Now he had but one child, a daughter, Ethnea by name. He made her a prisoner in a lofty height at the eastern extremity of the island, closely guarded by twelve matrons, who were strictly commanded never to mention to her the other sex.

Through trickery, Balor succeeded in stealing MacKineely's wonderful gray cow. A Druid told the owner that he never could recover the cow till Balor was killed. Now this was very difficult, for the robber was never known to close

his basilisk eye. A fairy, called "Biroge of the Mountain," came to the aid of MacKineely, and dressing him as a woman, took him through the air to the height Tor More, where Ethnea was kept and guarded. She pretended to have rescued the woman, and asked for shelter. This was granted, and the fairy put the twelve matrons to sleep, for they suspected no deceit. When they awoke, the guests were already gone, they knew not whither. Ethnea became the mother of triplets, which Balor immediately caused to be wrapped in a sheet, and sent out to sea to be drowned in a whirlpool. The eldest of the children fell into the sea before they reached the whirlpool, and was caught up by the fairy. The two others were drowned. The baby which the fairy had rescued was taken to MacKineely, who had it brought up by his brother as a smith. Balor, having learned that MacKineely was the father of his grandchildren—all of whom he supposed to be dead—took him to a large white stone, and there chopped off his head, and the blood penetrated the stone even to its center. Lug—for this was the name of the boy—grew up to manhood, nursed his wrath against Balor, worked with Gavida diligently as a smith, bided his time; and at last, taking from his forge an iron rod, he

thrust it into Balor's evil eye, so that it passed through his head and came out on the other side.

The Lugnassad were celebrated fairs and feasts instituted by Lug, and held on the first of August. The greatest of these was that of Tailltin, held in Meath in honor of Tailltin, by whom Lug was fostered and educated. Similar fairs were held also at Cruachan and Carman. These assemblies corresponded with the English Lammas which "seems to have been observed with bread of new wheat," and therefore in some parts of England, and even in some near Oxford, the tenants are bound to bring in wheat of that year to their lord, on or before the first of August. Tailltin was one of the dawn and dusk goddesses.

Says Rhys, comprehensively: "The Lammas fairs and meetings forming the Lugnassad in ancient Ireland, marked the victorious close of the sun's contest with the powers of darkness and death, when the warmth and light of that luminary's rays, after routing the colds and blights, were fast bringing the crops to maturity; this, more mythologically expressed, was represented as the final crushing of Fomori and Fir Bolg, the death of their king and the nullifying of their malignant spells, and as the triumphant return of

Lug with peace and plenty, to marry the maiden Erinn, and to enjoy a well-earned banquet, at which the fairy host of dead ancestors was probably not forgotten. Marriages were solemnized on the auspicious occasion; and no prince who failed to be present on the last day of the fair durst look forward to prosperity during the coming year."

On philological grounds, the cult of Lug may be shown to have originally prevailed throughout the whole of the Celtic territory. The town of Uxama, in Spain, furnishes an inscription which commemorates the building of a temple for the Lugoves, and the presentation of this temple to a college of cobblers. Avenches, in Switzerland, preserves a legend consisting of the single word "Lugoves"—probably father and son. The temple being dedicated to a college of cobblers reminds us of the magic stratagem of Gwydion and Llew to overreach Arionrhod, and secure a name for her son.

Cúchulainn was a sun-hero of wonderful exploits. In some respects he seems to have been but a reproduction of his father Lug, while in other respects he was more of a human hero. Like all other sun-heroes, his growth was rapid and his young manhood precocious. He was beardless; his hair was dark near the skin,

blood-red in the middle, and yellow at the top; and four dimples—in color yellow, green, blue, and red—adorned both his cheeks. He had bright flashing eyes, the pupils of which were formed of seven or eight gems. When pressed in battle, the calves of his legs would twist round to the front, his mouth would become large enough to contain a man's head, his liver and lungs would come up and become visible so as to be seen swinging in his throat, each hair of his body would become as sharp as a thorn, and a drop of blood or a spark of fire would stand on each, and his eyes would be changed in a fearful and marvelous manner. One of his eyes became as small as a needle's eye, or sunk so far into his head that a heron's beak could not reach it, while the other eye became correspondingly large and protruding. The ladies of Ulster, who loved him, are said to have made themselves blind of one eye while conversing with him. Analogous cases of acute loyalty are not unknown in our own country. Whenever engaged in battle he became gigantic in size; and when the fighting had ended, it was necessary to have three baths ready. He would plunge into the first, and the water would immediately boil over; he would plunge into the second, and it would instantly become too hot for anybody else to

endure, and only the third would suffice to cool his fiery person. He rode forth to battle in a scythed chariot drawn by two steeds, and swifter than the blasts of spring, and the iron wheels of his chariot sunk so deep into the ground that it was as though an army had dug ditches and thrown up dikes for the defense of the country. He was always distinguished for his remarkable wisdom, sweetness, speech, and many other excellencies.

Cúchulainn fought against Ailill and Medb, king and queen of Connaught. Ailill was one of the representatives of darkness, while his queen was the goddess of the dawn and the gloaming, and hence frequently showed Cúchulainn, the sun-god, not a little friendship. During these terrible conflicts, on one occasion, Lug came from fairy-land, took the place of his son for three days while he slept, and healed the wound which he had received.

“Cúchulainn was not more famous for his prowess in the field of battle than for his contests with beasts and fabulous creatures of all kinds; and the following story, which has an interest of its own, is told of him when he was as yet only six years old. King Conchobar, happening one day to visit the field where the noble youths of his kingdom were at their games, was

so struck by the feats performed by little Setanta, that he invited him to follow to a feast for which he and his courtiers were setting out. The boy said he would come when he had played enough. The feast was to be at the house of a great smith called Culann, who lived not only by his art of working in metals, but also by the wealth which prophecy and divination brought in. When the king and his men had arrived, Culann asked them if their number was complete, and the king forgetting the boy that was to follow, answered in the affirmative. Culann explained that he asked the question because when his gates were shut in the evening, he used to let loose a terrible war-hound, which he had obtained from Spain to guard his chattels and flocks during the night. So it was done then; but presently the boy Setanta came along, amusing himself with his hurlbat and ball as was his wont. He was hardly aware of the dog barking before it was at him; but he made short work of the brute, though not without rousing the Ultonians to horror at their oversight, for they had no doubt in their minds that the boy had been torn to pieces. The gates were thrown open, and the boy was found unharmed, with the dog lying dead at his feet. Like the rest, Culann welcomed him, for his mother's sake, as he said, but he could not help expressing his

regret at the death of his hound; for he declared that his losing the guardian of his house and his chattels made his home a desolation. Little Senta, who could not see why so much fuss should be made about the dog, bade the smith have no care, as he would himself guard all his property on the Plain of Murthemne till he had a grown-up dog of the same breed." *

He fulfilled his promise, and the Druid who was present gave him his name, Cu-Chulainn, "Culann's Hound."

Now Culann was a form of the deity of the other world, and we may compare his hound with the Cerberus of Greek mythology. The powers of darkness and the hostile powers of nature are the demons and monsters against which the god of the sun ever fights.

Our sun-hero had many most exciting and perilous adventures in the course of the numerous visits which he made to the realm of the dead. It was believed that when the sun sank below the western horizon he had gone to dwell in the world of shades. Thither Cúchulainn went (the place was called the Gardens of Lug) to carry away the beautiful Emer, with whom he was deeply in love. She was the daughter of the dusky king of the nether world, though she

* Rhys, Hibbert Lectures, 1886, pp. 445, 446.

was herself the very perfection of grace and beauty, and adorned with all attractive maidenly gifts and accomplishments. We can not fail to recognize in her the goddess of the dawn, who has demanded our attention so many times. It must be remembered that the dawn is not one but many, so that in the course of a year Cúchulainn made love with many fair maidens.

On one occasion a friendly stranger gave our hero a wheel and an apple, which in some way were to help him as he crossed a difficult plain. The wheel—and doubtless the apple or the ball—was a symbol of the sun.

“While the Ultonians were celebrating the great festival which marked the Calends of winter, and the days immediately before and after them, a flock of wild birds lighted on a loch near them. The ladies of Conchobar’s court took a fancy to them, and Cúchulainn was disgusted to find that they had nothing better for the men to do than that they should go bird-catching; but when his gallantry was duly appealed to, with an allusion to the number in Ulster of the noble ladies who were one-eyed out of love for him, he proceeded to catch the birds, which he distributed so liberally that he found, when he came to his own wife, he had none left for her. He was very sorry on that account,

and promised that as soon as ever any wild birds visited the plain of Murthemne or the river Boyne, the finest pair of them should be hers. It was not long ere two birds were seen swimming on the loch. They were observed to be joined together by a chain of ruddy gold, and they made a gentle kind of music, which caused the host to fall asleep. Cúchulainn went towards them; but his wife and his charioteer cautioned him to have nothing to do with them, as it was likely that there was some hidden power behind them. He would not listen, but cast a stone from his sling at them, which, to his astonishment, missed them. He cast another, with the same result. 'Woe is me!' said he. 'From the time when I took arms to this day my cast never missed.' He next threw his spear at them, which passed through the wing of one of the birds, and both dived. Cúchulainn, now in no happy mood, went and rested against a stone that stood near, and he fell asleep. He then dreamed that two women, one in green and the other in red, came up to him. The one in green smiled at him, and struck him a blow with a whip; the one in red did the same thing, and this horsewhipping of the hero went on till he was nearly dead. His friends came, and would have waked him had not one of them suggested that he was probably

dreaming; so they were careful not to disturb his nap. When, at length, he woke, he would tell them nothing, and he bade them place him in his bed. This all took place on the eve of November, when the Celtic year begins with the ascendancy of the powers of darkness. When Cúchulainn had lain in his bed, speaking to nobody for nearly a year, and the Ultonian nobles and his wife happened to be around him, some on the bed and the others close by, they suddenly found a stranger seated on the side of the bed. He said he had come to speak to Cúchulainn; and he sang a song, in which he informed him that he had come from his sister Fand and his sister Liban, to tell him that they would soon heal him if they were allowed. Fand, he said had conceived great love for him, and would give him her hand if he only visited her land, and treat him to plenty of silver and gold, together with much wine to drink. She would, moreover, send her sister Liban, on November-eve, to heal him. After having added that his own name was Ængus, brother to Fand and Liban, he disappeared as mysteriously as he had come. Cúchulainn then sat up in his bed, and told his friends all about the dream which had made him ill. He was advised to go to the spot where it occurred to him twelve months previously; for

such are the requirements of the fairy reckoning of time. He did so, and he beheld the woman in green coming toward him. He reproached her for what she had done, and she explained that she and her sister had come, not to harm him, but to seek his love. Fand, she said, had been forsaken by Manannán mac Lir, and had set her heart on him, Cúchulainn. Moreover, she had a message now from her own husband, Labraid of the Swift Hand on the Sword, to the effect that he would give him Fand to wife for one day's assistance against his enemies. Cúchulainn objected that he was not well enough to fight; but he was induced to send Loeg, his charioteer, with Liban, to see the mysterious land to which he was invited. Loeg, after conversing with Fand and Labraid of the Swift Hand on the Sword, returned with a glowing account of what he had seen. This revived the drooping spirits of his master, who passed his hand over his face and rapidly recovered his strength. Even then he would not go to Labraid's isle on a woman's invitation, and Loeg had to visit it again, and assure him that Labraid was impatiently expecting him for the war that was about to be waged. Then, at length, he went thither in his chariot, and fought. He abode there a month with Fand, and when he

left her he made an appointment to meet her at *Ibar Cinn Trachta*, or the Yew at the Strand's End, the spot, according to O'Curry, where Newry now stands. This came to the ears of Emer, Cúchulainn's wedded wife, and she, with the ladies of Ulster, repaired there, provided with sharp knives, to slay Fand. A touching scene follows, in which Emer recovers Cúchulainn's love, and Fand beholds herself about to be forsaken, whereupon she begins to bewail the happy days she had spent with her husband Manannán mac Lir in her bower at *Dún Inbír*, or the Fort of the Estuary. Nay, Fand's position in the unequal conflict with the ladies of Ulster became known to Manannán, the shape-shifting Son of the Sea, and he hastened over the plain to her rescue. 'What is that there?' inquired Cúchulainn. 'That,' said Loeg, 'is Fand going away with Manannán mac Lir, because she was not pleasing to thee.' At those words Cúchulainn went out of his mind, and leaped the three high leaps and the three southern leaps of Lua-chair. He remained a long time without food and without drink, wandering on the mountains and sleeping nightly on the road of Midluachair. Emer went to consult the king about him, and it was resolved to send the poets, the professional men, and the Druids of Ulster to seek him and

bring him home to Emain. He would have slain them; but they chanted spells of Druidism against him, whereby they were enabled to lay hold of his arms and legs. When he had recovered his senses a little, he asked a drink, and they gave him a drink of forgetfulness, which made him forget Fand and all his adventures. As Emer was not in a much better state of mind, the same drink was also administered to her; and Manannân had shaken his cloak between Fand and Cúchulainn that they might never meet again.*

In this story the world of waters is identified with the world of the dead. Fand, who has been married to the sea-god Manannán mac Lir, has been thought to be the sparkling dew-drop wooed by the sun. In another, this goddess is called "Forgall's Tear;" and Forgall is the father of Emer, and dwells in the Gardens of Lug.

Many other legends illustrate the life of this god of the sun, but we have presented perhaps all that is needed to a fair understanding of the subject.

Diarmait, another sun-god, was slain by the boar of winter, on the last night of the year. This must have been All-hallow-e'en. In Ire-

* Rhys, Hibbert Lectures, 1886, pp. 459-462.

land this was the day for prophecy and the unveiling of mysteries; and fires were lighted at Tlachtga, from which all other hearths were supplied. In Wales, women were accustomed to assemble, candle in hand, to learn their fortune from the flame, and to learn the names or see the coffins of all who were to die during the year; bonfires were lighted on the hills, and when the last spark had died out, the whole company would run away, shouting:

“The cropped black sow
Seize the hindmost!”

This may have pointed back to the period of human sacrifices.

The day was one for demons, goblins, and all hideous and uncanny spirits. The fact is, the sun-god, for a season, had been defeated; and his enemies, now triumphant, stalked abroad, insolent and aggressive. The chief of these spirits was pictured in the form of a sow, black and grisly, and with neither tail nor ears.*

There seems to be no doubt that human sacrifices were originally offered at several Celtic feasts. At the Beltane, in Scotland, held on the first of May, one man became a victim for his companions.

* Rhys, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1886, pp. 513-516.

The sun-god, under the name of Taliessin, was represented as a great poet and bard. As the story goes, Kerridwen and her husband, besides other children, had one named Avagdu, who was the ugliest man in the world. Despairing of his ever taking his place among gentlemen, unless he possessed surpassing qualities of mind, his mother determined to withhold no effort, and brewed for him a magic cauldron of poesy and science. Leaving the cauldron in the charge of blind Mordav and Gwion the Little, she went her way to gather herbs of rare virtue to place in the cauldron. According to the magic formula, the broth was to boil a whole year. But, as chance would have it, three drops fell on one of Gwion's fingers, and burned it so that he thrust it in his mouth. Upon doing this, immediately he knew everything. He knew that he had everything to fear from Kerridwen. So he fled for his life; and the cauldron burst, and the broth was wasted. He was pursued, and to escape, often changed his form; but Kerridwen was ever close on his track. At last, when he became a grain, Kerridwen became a crested black hen, and devoured him. Being born again, he was wrapped in a hide, and cast into the sea. The hide was picked up on one of the stakes of Gwydno's fish-net, on the first of

May. This young adventurer was Taliessin, who very soon recited three poems, and demonstrated his precocious development in wisdom and speech.

The magic broth was brewed for Avagdu, who was known to the Welsh as a synonym for Hell. We have already remarked the derivation of poetry and all knowledge from the powers of the nether world. Without relating the story of Taliessin further, we follow the line of thought suggested by the three drops of magic broth.

We may compare the Irish Finn with Gwion. To guard him from his enemies, he was sent to be educated by a poet, also named Finn. The boy found the poet watching Fiac's Pool, in the Boyne, to catch one of the "Salmon of Knowledge." There was a prophecy that one of these would be caught by Finn, who, after eating it, would know everything. At the end of seven years he caught the fish, and handed it to his pupil to cook. The boy burned his thumb, and put it in his mouth. His tutor learned this, and also that his name was Finn. Recognizing the fulfillment of prophecy, he gave him the whole Salmon of Knowledge. Whenever, thereafter, Finn wished to know anything he had only to chew his thumb, and all knowledge was immediately present to his mind.

Says Professor O'Curry: "In these very early times there was a certain mystical fountain, which was called Connla's Well—situated, so far as we can gather, in Lower Ormond. As to who this Connla was, from whom the well had its name, we are not told; but the well itself appears to have been regarded as another Helicon by the ancient Irish poets. Over this well there grew, according to the legend, nine beautiful mystical hazel-trees, which annually sent forth their blossoms and fruits simultaneously. The nuts were of the richest crimson color, and teemed with the knowledge of all that was refined in literature, poetry, and art. No sooner, however, were the beautiful nuts produced on the trees, than they always dropped into the well, raising, by their fall, a succession of shining red bubbles. Now, during this time, the water was always full of salmon; and no sooner did the bubbles appear than these salmon darted to the surface and ate the nuts, after which they made their way to the river. The eating of the nuts produced brilliant crimson spots on the bellies of the salmon; and to catch and eat these salmon became an object of more than mere gastronomic interest among those who were anxious to become distinguished in the arts and in literature, without being at the pains

and delay of long study; for the fish was supposed to have become filled with the knowledge which was contained in the nuts, which, it was believed, would be transferred in full to those who had the good fortune to catch and eat them." *

It is related that Sinann, daughter of Lodon, son of Lir, once upon a time, looked into the sacred well, when the water burst forth, and pursued and drowned her for the insult. This was the origin of the river Shannon. A similar story is related concerning a lady, Boann by name. She looked into the sacred well, and an infuriated stream pursued her even to the sea, where she was drowned. This stream is the river Boyne.

We may compare this Celtic Tree of Knowledge, and the fountain beneath its shade, with the mighty Ash of the Norse, and Mimer's Spring under one of its roots, for one draught of which Odin pledged his eye.

Among the gods mentioned in this discussion stands prominently Manannán, the god of the sea. He is represented as a celebrated merchant of the Isle of Man, and the best pilot in the west of Europe. He was able to foretell foul or fair weather, with absolute certainty, by study-

* Rhys, Hibbert Lectures, 1886, pp. 553, 554.

ing the stars. He was the son of Lir—the original of Shakspeare's King Lear—but is also called the son of Allot, of the tribe of the Tuatha Dé Danann. In Irish story he is the chief of the fairies of the Land of Promise.

His Welsh counterpart is Manawyddan, who is described as peaceful, gentle, and just. Brân, the brother of Manawyddan, gave his sister in marriage to Matholwch, king of Ireland, but she was disgraced and driven from the court, and yet because of no fault of her own. Her brother made an expedition to Ireland to avenge her wrongs. Since no ship could be constructed large enough to receive him, he was compelled to wade the intervening waters.

“As he approached the Irish shore the swineherds of Erin hastened to Matholwch's court with the strange story that they had seen a forest on the sea, and near it a great mountain with its spur flanked by two lakes; they added that both forest and mountain were in motion towards the land. Nobody could explain this until Branwen was summoned, and she told them that the trees were the masts of her countrymen's vessels, that the mountain they had seen must be her brother wading through shallow water, and that the mountain spur with the two lakes were his nose and eyes; she opined that his countenance

betokened anger towards Erinn. Matholweh and his host hastened to place a river between them and the invaders. When the latter reached the stream, they found the bridge over it gone and the current impassable, until Brân laid himself across its bed, and hurdles were placed on his body, so that his men passed over safely."

Reconciliation was effected, and the Irish built for Brân a great palace. But peace continued not; for again there was a quarrel, resulting in a great slaughter in the palace, whence only Brân and seven of his men escaped alive. Having been wounded he ordered his men to cut off his head and take it with them to their own country. These seven men sat seven years at dinner at Harlech, in the society of Brân's head, listening to the song of the Birds of Rhiannon; and then they feasted eighty years in the island of Gwales. Much is said in Celtic literature concerning this wonderful head. Cernunnos, who may be the same—of whom we shall have more to say in a future chapter—is sometimes represented as a mere head or as a triple head.

There are several other Celtic gods which might be mentioned, but the limits of this work do not permit any detailed study of their characters.

The key to the solution of this mythological

system has already been given—the friendly or malevolent character of these divinities and spirits with reference to the world and man. The cold mists and baleful fogs which retard vegetation; the excessive damps so injurious to crops, and the processes of corruption so difficult for primitive peoples to understand; the consuming drought of summer; the early frosts and the late wintry storms,—these are some of the facts which our fathers sought to explain. Frequently what is presented in ancient story as early wars between hostile tribes is but the ever repeated conflict between good and evil spirits.

The custom of the Celts of all times concerning the disposition of the dead points to the doctrine of immortality. The departed journeyed to some happy home, frequently located in the west. “A general belief of the Gael was that the future state of permanent happiness was in *Flath-innis*, a remote island in the west; but they also thought that particular clans had certain hills to which the spirits of their departed friends had a peculiar attachment.”*

Baring-Gould, on the authority of Macpherson, relates the following legend:

“One day a famous Druid of *Skerr* sat upon the rocks by the sea-shore, musing. A storm

* Logan, *The Scottish Gael*, p. 463.

arose, the waves dashed high and the winds howled. Out of it a boat, with white sails and gleaming oars, emerged. In it were no sailors; the boat seemed to live and move of itself. A voice called to the Druid: 'Arise, and see the Green Isle of those who have passed away!' He entered the boat; the wind shifted at once, and amid clouds and spray he sailed forth. Seven days gleamed on him through the mist; on the eighth the waves rolled violently, the vessel pitched, and darkness thickened around him, when suddenly he heard a cry, 'The Isle! the Isle!' The clouds parted before him, the waves abated, the wind died away, and the vessel rushed into dazzling light. Before his eyes lay the isle of the departed, basking in golden light. Its hills sloped, green and tufted with beauteous trees, to the shore; the mountain-tops were enveloped in bright and transparent clouds, from which gushed limpid streams, which, wandering down the steep hill-sides with pleasant harp-like murmur, emptied themselves into the twinkling, blue bays; the valleys were open and free to the ocean; trees loaded with leaves, which scarcely waved to the light breeze, were scattered on the green declivities and rising ground; all was calm and bright; the pure sun of autumn shone from his blue sky on the fields; he hastened not to the west for repose, nor was he

seen to rise in the east, but hung as a golden lamp, ever illuminating the Fortunate. There, in radiant halls, dwelt the spirits of the departed, ever blooming and beautiful, ever laughing and gay."

About the year 575 the learned classes of Ireland were organized by a Parliament, which was held at Druimceta. Three orders were recognized—*Gradh Ecná*, *Gradh Fene*, and *Gradh Fili*. *Ecná* means wisdom, and its graduate is a *Sai* or sage. The sage who graduates in its highest degree is *Ollamh*, and enjoys the rank of a tribe-king. He settles all questions between tribes, interprets laws, decides concerning the succession of chiefs, and is the historian and genealogist of the tribe. The function of judge passed from the Druids to the chiefs. The judge was a *Sai*, and kept a kind of law-school. The chief, when the office devolved upon him, and he did not wish to perform its duties personally, appointed another to the judgeship. Hence arose the second learned class, the *Gradh Fene*. The *Fili* represented the *Ovates*, and some of the forms of their incantations have been preserved. The *Ollamh Fili* pronounced eulogies in praise of his chief, and earned for himself various emoluments. The Bards, who recited stories and poems, were at first distinct from the *Fili*, but the two orders afterward coa-

lesced. To the Druidic order probably belonged the physician, the Fâth-Liag. Dian Cecht was the old god of healing. The influence of Druidism is seen in the organization of the early Christian Churches of England and Ireland. When a Christian missionary succeeded in leading a chief and some of the principal men of his tribe to Christ, the missionary himself was frequently adopted into the tribe as a Sai, and enjoyed the same rank and privileges as a Druidic priest. The learned orders remained the same, but Christian doctrines were added to the studies. The organization of the early schools of Ireland was influenced by Druidism. The course of study, called *Filidecht*, which the Ollamh Fili pursued, occupied twelve years, and included the secret language of the poets, the knowledge of numerous tales and poems, the art of vaticination, and other lore.

In Wales each king or prince had a household bard, called *Bardd Teuleu*, to whom the functions of the Irish Sai and Fili belonged. There was also a chief bard, called *Pencedd*, who was either an officer of the household or sometimes independent. Like an Ollamh, he could make a circuit for purposes of song, or keep a school for the study of poetry. He enjoyed many privileges and emoluments, and was one of the four-

teen persons who were entitled to a chair at the court.

The modern bards of Wales are thought by some writers to be the religious descendants of the ancient Druids, or, at least, to be the depositaries of genuine Druidic lore. The system of Neo-Druidism is gigantic and carefully wrought; but the evidence upon which it is based is far from satisfactory. We may, however, thankfully admit that it contains not a few fragments of ancient wisdom.

Several volumes of mystic learning have been published. A few passages from the teachings of the modern bards will not be out of place:

“When God pronounced his name, with the word sprang the light and the life; for previously there was no life except God himself.” The form of the light was the unpronounceable name of God in the three mystic characters by which God declared his “existence, life, knowledge, power, eternity, and universality.” “And in the declaration was his love; that is, co-instantaneously with it sprang, like lightning, all the universe into life and existence, co-vocally and co-jubilantly with the uttered name of God, in one united song of exultation and joy.” From this revelation of the name of God, Menw the

Aged, son of Menwd, obtained the three letters from which he formed the alphabet. This mystic name must not be uttered in the hearing of any man in the world. "Nevertheless, everything calls him inwardly by this name—the sea and land, earth and air, and all the visibles and invisibles of the world, whether on the earth or in the sky; all the worlds of the celestials and terrestrials, every intellectual being and existence, everything animate and inanimate. Wherefore none that honors God will call him by this name, except inwardly."

Much of the teaching of the modern bards is given in triads, of which we give examples:

"Three things will necessarily exist: the supreme power, the supreme intelligence, and the supreme love of God.

"The three characteristics of God: complete life, complete knowledge, and complete power.

"The three manifestations of God: fatherhood, sonship, and spirituality.

"The three supports of a moral man: God, his own conscience, and the praise of all the wise.

"The three felicities of heaven: the utter subjugation of all evil, everlasting life, and the endless renovation of bliss." *

* Williams, Barddas, Vol. I, pp. 17-23, 171, 183, 185.

The bards of Neo-Druidism teach both the pre-existence and the transmigration of souls. Existence begins in the lowest form of life, and at each successive death passes into some other body, till all possible lower existences have been traversed, when it enters the body of man. He can choose good or evil. If he choose good, and good predominate at his death, he enters Gwynvyd, or heaven, from which he can not fall. If he choose evil, and evil predominate at his death, the soul appears in some lower animal corresponding in character to his own character at death. He may now rise step by step till he again becomes a man, when he has another opportunity of choosing. He may fall again and again, but ultimate success is assured, because the same sin can not be committed or can not produce the same evil results the second time. So all life will end in Gwynvyd. The soul begins existence in lowest Annwn, passes through the irresponsible lives of the circle of Abred below man, in which evil predominates; passes through the responsible human circle of existence, in which good and evil equiponderate; and finally enters Gwynvyd, where good predominates, and from which the soul can not fall. Man seems not to be free to choose precisely the same

evil the second time; hence heaven is finally assured.*

The white robe of the Druid is a symbol of holiness, the green robe of the Ovate a symbol of knowledge, and the blue robe of the Bard a symbol of peace and love.

* Williams, *Barddas*, Vol. I, pp. xlii, 213-217.

III.

THE CLASSICS AND THE INSCRIPTIONS.

WE shall now be prepared to appreciate what classic writers say concerning the religion of the Celts. We may also listen to the voice of monumental witnesses.

Cæsar is a very trustworthy authority. He speaks from personal knowledge in many cases, as he always had access to many reliable sources of information. He writes with deliberation and judgment, and furnishes the fullest and most satisfactory account of all the writers who have treated the subject. As to integrity and honesty, he is an unimpeachable witness. Speaking of the Druids of Gaul, he says :

“They preside over sacred things, have the charge of public and private sacrifices, and explain their religion. To them a great number of youths have recourse for the sake of acquiring instruction, and they are in great honor among them; for they generally settle all their disputes, both public and private; and if there is any transgression perpetrated, any murder committed, or any dispute about inheritance or boundaries,

they decide in respect of them. They appoint rewards and penalties; and if any private or public person abides not by their advice, they restrain him from the sacrifices. This with them is the most severe punishment. . . . But one presides over all these Druids, who possesses the supreme authority among them. . . . At a certain time of the year they assemble in session on a consecrated spot in the confines of the Carnutes, which is considered the central region of the whole of Gaul. Thither all who have any disputes come together from every side, and acquiesce in their judgments and decisions. The institution is thought to have originated in Britain, and to have been thence introduced into Gaul; and even now those who wish to become more accurately acquainted with it generally repair thither for the sake of learning it. The Druids usually abstain from war; nor do they pay taxes together with the others. They have exemption from warfare, and the free use of all things. . . . Some continue at their education for twenty years. Nor do they deem it lawful to commit those things to writing, though generally, in other cases, and in their public and private accounts, they use Greek letters. They appear to me to have established this custom for two reasons: because they would not have their tenets

published, and because they would not have those who learn them by trusting to letters neglect the exercise of memory. . . . In particular they wish to inculcate the idea that souls do not die, but pass, after death, from one body to another. . . . They also dispute largely concerning the stars and their motion, the magnitude of the world and the earth, the nature of things, the force and power of the immortal gods, and instruct the youth in their principles. The whole nation of the Gauls is very much given to religious observances, and on that account those who are afflicted with grievous diseases, and those who are engaged in battles and perils, either immolate men as sacrifices or vow that they will immolate themselves; and they employ the Druids as ministers of those sacrifices, because they think that if the life of man is not given for the life of man the immortal gods can not be appeased. They have also instituted public sacrifices of the same kind. Some have images of immense size, the limbs of which, interwoven with twigs, they fill with living men; and the same being set on fire, the men, surrounded by the flames, are put to death." *

For these sacrifices they preferred criminals; but when these failed, they did not hesitate to

* Gallic War, vi, 13-18.

sacrifice the innocent. They worshiped certain gods which Cæsar identified with Mercury, Apollo, Mars, Jupiter, and Minerva.

Strabo gives the following account: "Amongst the Gauls there are generally three divisions of men especially revered—the Bards, the Vates, and the Druids. The Bards composed and chanted hymns; the Vates occupied themselves with the sacrifices and the study of nature; while the Druids joined to the study of nature that of moral philosophy. The belief in the justice of the Druids is so great that the decision both of public and private disputes is referred to them; and they have before now, by their decision, prevented armies from engaging when drawn up in battle array against each other. All cases of murder are particularly referred to them. When there is plenty of these, they imagine there will likewise be a plentiful harvest. Both these and the others assert that the soul is indestructible, and likewise the world; but that sometimes fire and sometimes water have prevailed in making great changes."

The Romans put a stop to their modes of sacrifice and divination. They would strike a man devoted as an offering in his back with a sword, and divine, from his convulsive throes. Without the Druids they never sacrifice. It is said they

have other modes of sacrificing their human victims; that they pierce some of them with arrows, and crucify others in their temples; and that they prepare a colossus of hay and wood, into which they put cattle, beasts of all kinds, and men, and then set fire to it.

“They say that in the ocean, not far from the coast, there is a small island lying opposite to the outlet of the river Loire, inhabited by Samnite women, who are Bacchantes, and conciliate and appease that god by mysteries and sacrifices. No man is permitted to land on the island. . . . They have a custom of once a year unroofing the whole of the temple, and roofing it again the same day before sunset, each one bringing some of the materials. If any one lets her burden fall, she is torn in pieces by the others, and her limbs carried round the temple with wild shouts, which they never cease till their rage is exhausted. They say it always happens that some one drops her burden, and is thus sacrificed.”

The inhabitants of Ierna, or Hibernia, are “more savage than the Britains, feeding on human flesh, and are enormous eaters, even deeming it commendable to devour their deceased fathers.” They are openly impure and incestuous.

“It is reported that the Cimbri had a peculiar custom. They were accompanied in their

expeditions by their wives; these were followed by hoary-headed priestesses, clad in white, with cloaks of carbasus fastened on with clasps, girt with brazen girdles, and barefooted. These individuals, bearing drawn swords, went to meet the captives throughout the camp, and having crowned them, led them to a brazen vessel containing about twenty amphoræ, and placed on a raised platform, which one of the priestesses having ascended, and holding the prisoner above the vessel, cut his throat; then, from the manner in which the blood flowed into the vessel, some drew certain divinations, while others, having opened the corpse and inspected the entrails, prophesied victory to their army.”*

Artemidorus says that there is an island near Britain in which they perform sacrifices to Ceres and Proserpine in the same manner as they do in Samothrace.†

Diodorus Siculus writes of the Druids of Gaul as follows:

“And there are among them composers of verses, whom they call Bards; these, singing to instruments similar to a lyre, applaud some, while they vituperate others. There are also certain philosophers and priests, surpassingly es-

*Strabo, IV, iv, 4-6; v, 4; VII, ii, 3.

†Strabo, IV, iv, 6.

teemed, whom they call Druids. They have also soothsayers, who are held in high estimation; and these, by auguries and the sacrifice of victims, foretell future events, and hold the commonalty in complete subjection; and more especially, when they deliberate on matters of moment, they practice a strange and incredible rite; for, having devoted a man for sacrifice, they strike him with a sword on a part above the diaphragm; the victim having fallen, they augur from his mode of falling, the contortion of his limbs, and the flowing of the blood, what may come to pass, giving credence concerning such things according to an ancient and long-standing observance. They have a custom of performing no sacrifice unattended by a philosopher; for they say that thanksgiving should be offered to the gods by men acquainted with the divine nature and using the same language, and by these they deem it necessary to ask for good things; and not only in the concerns of peace, but even of war—not friends alone, but even enemies also—chiefly defer to them and to the composers of verses. Frequently, during hostilities, when armies are approaching each other with swords drawn and lances extended, these men, rushing between them, put an end to their

contention, taming them as they would tame wild beasts."*

Diodorus quotes from Hecateus, the Melesian, who wrote about B. C. 500:

"Among the Hyperboreans were men—priests, as it were, of Apollo—constantly hymning lyric songs in his praise. Also in that island was a consecrated precinct of great magnificence, a temple of corresponding beauty, in shape spherical, adorned with numerous dedicated gifts; also a city sacred to the god, the majority of its inhabitants harpers, who, continually harping in the temple, sung lyrical hymns to the god, greatly magnifying his dèeds. . . . Every nineteenth year the god descends into this island. This was the great year of the Hellenes. When the god makes his periodical visit, he both plays the harp and dances during the night, from the vernal equinox to the rising of the Pleiades, taking great delight in his own successful efforts."

Hecateus, who makes Britain the land of the Hyperboreans, may have derived his knowledge from the reports of Phœnician merchants. What he says is worthy of some consideration, whatever we may think of this race, which is at least

* History, V, 31.

semi-fabulous. Pliny gives a brilliant account of this happy race.*

We quote several passages from Pliny, whose testimony is valuable as presenting truthful accounts of the beliefs of his time :

“The Druids—for that is the name they give to their magicians—held nothing more sacred than the mistletoe and the tree that bears it, supposing always that tree to be the *robur*. Of itself the *robur* is selected by them to form whole groves, and they perform none of their religious rites without employing branches of it; so much so, that it is very probable that the priests themselves may have received their name from the Greek name for that tree. In fact, it is the notion with them that everything that grows on it has been sent immediately from heaven, and that the mistletoe upon it is a proof that the tree has been selected by God himself as an object of his especial favor.

“The mistletoe, however, is but rarely found upon the *robur*, and, when found, is gathered with rites replete with religious awe. This is done more particularly on the fifth day of the moon, the day which is the beginning of their months and years, as also of their ages, which, with them, are but thirty years. This day they

* Natural History, iv, 26.

select because the moon, though not yet in the middle of her course, has already considerable power and influence; and they call her by a name which signifies, in their language, the all-healing. Having made all due preparation for the sacrifice and a banquet beneath trees, they bring thither two white bulls, the horns of which are bound then for the first time. Clad in a white robe, the priest ascends the tree, and cuts the mistletoe with a golden sickle, which is received by others in a white cloak. They then immolate the victims, offering up their prayer that God will render this gift of his propitious to those to whom he has so granted it.”*

Savin also is sacred, and must be gathered with superstitious rites. “Care is taken to gather it without the use of iron, the right hand being passed for the purpose through the left sleeve of the tunic, as though the gatherer were in the act of committing a theft. The clothing too must be white, the feet bare and washed clean, and a sacrifice of bread and wine must be made before gathering it; it is carried also in a new napkin.” The “samolus” must be gathered fasting with the left hand, the person who gathers it being careful not to look behind. If these superstitions belong to the Druids, they are

* Natural History, xvi, 95.

not unlike multitudes of others related by Pliny. *

An egg, said to be of peculiar formation, is held in great repute among the Druids.

“In summer-time, numberless snakes become artificially entwined together, and form rings around their bodies with the viscous slime which exudes from their mouths, and with the foam secreted by them; the name given to this substance is ‘anguinem.’ The Druids tell us that the serpents eject these eggs into the air by their hissing, and that a person must be ready to catch them in a cloak, so as not to let them touch the ground. They say also that he must instantly take to flight on horseback, as the serpents will be sure to pursue him until some intervening river has placed a barrier between them. The test of its genuineness, they say, is its floating against the current of a stream, even though it be set in gold. But as it is the way with magicians to be dexterous and cunning in casting a veil about their frauds, they pretend that these eggs can only be taken on a certain day of the moon; as though, forsooth, it depended entirely upon the human will to make the moon and the serpents accord as to the moment of this operation.

* Natural History, xxiv, 62, 63.

“I myself, however, have seen one of these eggs; it was round, and about as large as an apple of moderate size; the shell of it was formed of a cartilaginous substance, and it was surrounded with numerous cupules, as it were, resembling those upon the arms of the polypus.”*

The Annals of Tacitus contains this account of the Druids of Britain:

“When Mona, or Anglesey, was invaded by Suetonius Paulinus, there stood in the distance on the strand an army in battle array, thick with armed men. Women with disheveled hair, clad in funeral garments, like furies ran to and fro, holding aloft flaming torches. There were Druids also, with hands uplifted to heaven, pouring forth terrible imprecations. The soldiers were struck with awe and terror at the novelty of the sight; so that, as if their limbs clung to the ground, they presented their unmoved bodies to the wounds which the enemy might inflict. When the island was taken, the religious groves, dedicated to superstition and barbarous rites, were leveled to the ground. In their recesses the natives imbrued their altars with the blood of the prisoners, and in the entrails of men explored the will of the gods.”†

Ammianus Marcellinus says: “Throughout

* Natural History, xxix, 12. † Tacitus, Annals, xiv, 31.

these provinces, the people gradually becoming civilized, the study of liberal accomplishments flourished, having been first introduced by the Bards, the Eubages, and the Druids. The Bards were accustomed to employ themselves in celebrating the brave achievements of their illustrious men, in epic verse, accompanied with sweet airs on the lyre. The Eubages investigated the system and sublime secrets of nature, and sought to explain them to their followers. Between these two came the Druids, men of loftier genius, bound in brotherhoods according to the precepts and example of Pythagoras; and their minds were elevated by investigations into secret and sublime matters, and from the contempt which they entertained for human affairs they pronounced the soul immortal.*

Lucan contains several passages of interest: "You, too, ye Bards, who, as poets, hand down in your praises to remote ages spirits valiant, and cut off in war, freed from alarm, did then pour forth full many a strain; and you, Druids, after arms were laid aside, sought once again your barbarous ceremonials and the ruthless usages of your sacred rites. To you alone has it been granted to know the gods and the divinities of

* History, xv, 9.

heaven, or alone to know that they do not exist. In remote forests do you inhabit the deep glades. On your authority the shades seek not the silent abodes of Erebus, and the pallid realms of Pluto in the depths below; the same spirit controls other limbs in another world; death is the mid space in a prolonged existence, if you sing what is ascertained as truth."

And again: "There was a grove, never violated during long ages, which with its knitted branches shut in the darkened air and the cold shade, the rays of the sun being far removed. This no rustic Pans and Fauns and Nymphs, all-powerful in the groves, possessed, but sacred rites of the gods barbarous in their ceremonial, and elevations crowned with ruthless altars; and every tree was stained with human gore. If at all, antiquity, struck with awe at the gods of heaven, has been deserving of belief, upon these branches, too, the birds of the air dread to perch, and the wild beasts to lie in the caves; nor does any wind blow upon those groves, and lightnings hurled from the dense clouds; a shuddering in themselves prevails among the trees that spread forth their branches to no breezes. Besides, from black springs plenteous water falls, and the saddened images of the gods are devoid of art, and

stand unsightly, formed from hewn trunks. The very moldiness and paleness of the rotting wood now renders people stricken with awe; not thus do they dread the deities consecrated with ordinary forms; so much does it add to the terror not to know what gods they are in dread of. Fame, too, reported that full oft the hollow caverns roared amid the earthquake, and that yews that had fallen rose again, and that flames shone from a grove that did not burn, and that serpents embracing the oaks entwined around them. The people throng that place with no approaching worship, but have left it to the gods. When Phœbus is in the mid-sky, or dark night possesses the heavens, the priest himself dreads the approach, and is afraid to meet with, the guardian of the grove.” *

This author even mentions the Celtic names of certain deities: “The relentless Teutates,” “appeased by direful bloodshed;” “Hesus, dreadful with his merciless altars;” and the shrine of Taranis, not more human than that of Scythian Diana.” †

Diogenes Laertius calls the Druids philosophers, and compares them with the Magi among the Persians, the Chaldæi among the Babylo-

* Pharsalia, pp. 29, 30, 112, 113. † *Ib.*, p. 29.

nians and Assyrians, and the Gymnosophistæ among the Indians.*

There are several other classical allusions, but they afford little new information. Pomponius Mela says that the Druids are eloquent in speech and masters of wisdom, and teach that men should be brave, especially in war. According to this authority, the business accounts of men are sent with them to the other world for inspection and settlement. Some immolate themselves on the funeral pyres of their friends, that they may accompany them to the world of spirits. Quintus, the brother of Cicero, was intimately acquainted with Divitiacus the Druid, an Æduan, who professed an intimate knowledge of the system of nature, and foretold future events. Lampridius and Vopiscus make mention of prophetic women, one of whom is said to have foretold the death of Diocletian.

Scholars are not agreed as to the etymology of the name Druid. Druidh is still used in Gaelic for "wise men," and druithnich, or drui, for "servants of truth." Ménage, derives the word from drus, "a magician;" and according to Keysler draoi means "a magician, an enchanter." The Abbé Pierre de Chiniac derives from de, "god" and rouyd, "speaking;" hence the word

* The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers, i, 1.

would mean "speaking of God." The ancient Highlanders called the tiller of the soil "draonaich," which is thought to be a genuine name of the Picts. In Ireland draoneach means "an artist."* The common derivation is from the Greek $\delta\rho\tilde{\upsilon}\varsigma$, "an oak;" Welsh, *derw*; Armorican, *dero*, *derv*; Cornish, *dar*; Gaelic, *darach*.† John Rhys, our latest and greatest authority, agrees with Pliny in deriving the word from the Greek, and refers to Drunemeton, the sacred oak grove, where Strabo says the Galatians were wont to assemble.‡

From our classic quotations we may also learn that the religion of the Druids was so far developed as to provide for an order of priesthood presided over by an Arch-Druid. The priests were learned, influential, and privileged, and were judges in most important public and private cases. They were devoted to the acquisition and dissemination of learning. Their mysteries were unwritten, and were transmitted by memory alone. They offered sacrifices—sometimes human sacrifices—in a sacred shrine. They prophesied concerning the future. They believed in the immortality and the transmigra-

* Logan, *Scottish Gael*, pp. 448, 295, 296.

† Zeuss, *Grammatica Celtica*, Vol. I, p. 7.

‡ Rhys, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1886, pp. 221, 222.

tion of souls. They recognized responsibility and sin, and trusted in the efficacy of sacrifices, prayers, and religious rites. They worshiped various gods, which the classic writers have identified with Roman gods. The mysteries of their religion are revealed only to the initiated.

The mysteries served several purposes. Important rites, symbols, and doctrines were most thoroughly learned, and their value most forcibly expressed and impressed upon the mind. The memory was greatly strengthened. A charm was thrown about religious exercises at once fascinating to the initiated and inviting to the uninitiated. The laity revered and feared the holy orders, and considered the priests the special favorites of the gods, and the divinely appointed means of communicating with heaven. It was considered unsafe to commit the highest religious truths to the unlearned and the unworthy. They could not understand them; they could not appreciate them. It were better for them to follow blindly the teachings of the priestly class. We may compare this system with the Eleusinian and the Samothracian mysteries.

The transmigration of souls has its root in the belief in immortality. Therein is also recognized the unity of life. Life in its essence is the same, whatever may be its transient habita-

tion. This lays the foundation of Pantheism. All life is a part of The Life. In this doctrine is also recognized moral desert. The differences which exist between individuals in the present life are the result of the earnings of previous lives. There are in this world unfitness and imperfection. Life is not what it ought to be—not what it must be before there can be rest. Hence there are numerous lives in numerous bodies till there result fitness, perfection, and purity. We may compare the same doctrine as developed in Hinduism.

The reasonableness of sacrifice—and, indeed, of human sacrifice—must have been very obvious to primitive races, so widely did the custom extend in all lands. It is founded in this same principle of the unity of life, or, at least, in the unity of the source of life. All life is either of God in its essence, or is derived from him, and hence to him belongs. There is some portion of divine life in everything visible—the largest portion in man. In sacrifice there is given back to God what is his own. The dearest possession, the most valuable sacrifice, is most acceptable to him as containing the most of his own divinity, and as carrying to him the most of the heart of the worshiper. Hence human sacrifices. Then, too, the gods must be propitiated, that they may

deal mercifully with the unworthy and the transgressor. Life alone can atone for sin—life alone can ransom life. The human life offered to the gods was not destroyed; it was saved; it went to the gods. The victim, in being sacrificed, was sanctified, and became spotless and pure.

Christ is the world's one great sacrifice—the life given for life. And now acceptable sacrifice is a broken heart and a contrite spirit, which God will not despise.

The plentiful harvest corresponding to abundance of murders can not be explained, unless the killing be considered as sacrificing to the gods in some sense, and hence a religious act.

The unroofing and re-roofing of the temple of the Bacchantes may have some reference to sun-worship.

In the ascribing of occult powers to certain objects, the Druids recognized the presence of invisible forces, and an invisible spiritual realm. They also seemed to recognize the basal unity of force and law. Such occult powers were not always necessary to the existence of the object, for they might be lost if the priest were not careful in the observance of mystic ceremonies. Sometimes such powers were invited by prayers and invocations to make certain objects their home. Each object seemed to possess a spiritual

part. They sought to secure the friendship of these invisible powers, and to use them against their enemies, or to secure good fortune, or again to drive away disease. There might result fetishism; there might result magic. The association of ideas may be the key to the understanding of occult science. "Man, as yet in a low intellectual condition, having come to associate in thought those things which he found in experience to be connected in fact, proceeded erroneously to invert this action, and to conclude that association in thought must involve similar connection in reality." *

The reasoning was not wholly erroneous. There is some connection between all existences—a connection which has its basis in the Supreme Mind; but it is not such a connection as magic demands. The Druids believed in the power of invocations, imprecations, incantations, and charms. Thus to will was to accomplish. The will is the supreme of man. Mind is the monarch of matter. Invisible agents go at the command of will. Words themselves are deified as possessing inherent and wonderful powers. Thus starting from what is true, the end is false.

There easily results divination or prophecy.

* Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. I, p. 116.

If the world and the creator be the same, or if the world be ruled by stern mechanical law, then could one particle of matter, or one action or attribute of mind, at any moment be perfectly known, all—past, present, and future—would be known. The future would be revealed to the man who could read aright. Again, the spirit which controls an animal, living or dying, may know the future and make it known to man. In either case there is an underlying unity of law. Man is connected with all existences. In recognition of the continuance of these relations after death, articles of ornament and usefulness are buried with the dead that they may not want in the next life.

The gods of Gaul were assimilated with the gods of Rome, notably under the policy of Augustus. The result was that the name of the Gaulish god was treated more or less as a mere epithet to that of the Roman divinity. “Nay, the Roman god not unfrequently seized on the attributes of the native one even to the extent of assuming his Gaulish costume and non-classical appearance.” Moreover, the cult of the Roman gods was introduced and established all over the country. The Gaulish divinities, in fine, were reduced in rank, but were not banished.

We may identify in the inscriptions the Gal-

lic gods which have been assimilated to the Roman divinities which are named in the classics.

An inscription found near Beaucroissant, at a place which was once called Artay, contains the name of the god *Mercurius Artaius*, who would seem to have been connected with agriculture, and especially with plowing. Another inscription found at Hières would connect this divinity with war or kingship. He had temples, most of which belonged to the god in his native character, in no less than twenty-six places in the territory of the *Allobroges* alone. Many names of places prove the wide extent of the worship of Mercury. He affected high places, for his temples were frequently situated in conspicuous positions. The Greek artist *Zenodorus* made a colossal Mercury for the great temple of the *Arverni* on *Puy de Dôme*. It was one hundred and twenty feet high, and was the work of ten years. *

This god is also the discoverer of roads and paths.

Ogmios was one of his principal Gallic names. *Rhys* quotes from *Lucian* as follows :

“The Celts, he says, call *Heracles* in the language of their country *Ogmios*, and they make

* *Pliny*, xxxiv, 18.

very strange representations of the god. With them he is an extremely old man, with a bald forehead and his few remaining hairs quite gray; his skin is wrinkled and embrowned by the sun to that degree of swarthinness which is characteristic of men who have grown old in a seafaring life; in fact, you would fancy him rather to be a Charon or Japetus, one of the dwellers in Tartarus, or anybody rather than Heracles. But although he is of this description, he is, nevertheless, attired like Heracles, for he has on him the lion's skin, and he has a club in his right hand; he is duly equipped with a quiver, and his left hand displays a bow stretched out; in these respects he is quite Heracles. It struck me, then, that the Celts took such liberties with the appearance of Heracles in order to insult the gods of the Greeks and avenge themselves on him in their painting, because he once made a raid on their territory, when in search of the herds of Geryon he harassed most of the western people. I have not yet, however, mentioned the most whimsical part of the picture; for this old man Heracles draws after him a great number of men bound by their ears, and the bonds are slender cords wrought of gold and amber, like necklaces of the most beautiful make; and although they are dragged on by such weak ties, they never try to run

away, though they could easily do it; nor do they at all resist or struggle against them, planting their feet on the ground and throwing their weight back in the direction contrary to that in which they are being led. Quite the reverse; they follow with joyful countenance in a merry mood, and praising him who leads them, pressing on one and all, and slackening their chains in their eagerness to proceed; in fact, they look like men who would be grieved should they be set free. But that which seemed to me the most absurd thing of all I will not hesitate also to tell you; the painter, you see, had nowhere to fix the ends of the cords, since the right hand of the god held the club and his left the bow; so he pierced the tip of his tongue, and represented the people as drawn on from it, and the god turns a smiling countenance towards those whom he is leading. Now I stood a long time looking at these things, and wondered, perplexed and indignant. But a certain Celt standing by, who knew something about our ways, as he showed by speaking good Greek—a man who was quite a philosopher, I take it, in local matters—said to me, Stranger, I will tell you the secret of the painting, for you seem very much troubled about it. We Celts do not consider the power of speech to be *Hermes*, as you Greeks do, but we represent it by means

of Heracles, because he is much stronger than Hermes. Nor should you wonder at his being represented as an old man, for the power of words is wont to show its perfection in the aged; for your poets are no doubt right when they say that the thoughts of young men turn with every wind, and that age has something wiser to tell us than youth. And so it is that honey pours from the tongue of that Nestor of yours, and the Trojan orators speak with a voice of the delicacy of the lily, a voice well covered, so to say, with bloom; for the bloom of flowers, if my memory does not fail me, has the term lilies applied to it. So if this old man Heracles, the power of speech, draws men after him, tied to his tongue by their ears, you have no reason to wonder, as you must be aware of the close connection between the ears and the tongue. Nor is there any injury done him by this latter being pierced; for I remember, said he, learning while among you some comic iambics to the effect that all chattering fellows have the tongue bored at the tip. In a word, we Celts are of opinion that Heracles himself performed everything by the power of words, as he was a wise fellow, and that most of his compulsion was effected by persuasion. His weapons, I take it, are his utterances, which are sharp and well-aimed, swift to pierce the

mind; and you too say that words have wings. Thus far the Celt." *

The word Ogmios is found in the Celtic languages in several forms. Ogma is an Irish god, skilled in dialects and poetry. He it was who invented the Ogam mode of writing.

The most important Gallic appellations of Apollo were Maponos, Grannus, and Toutiorix. Three inscriptions of Apollo Maponos have been discovered in the north of England. In Dacia we meet with Bonus Puer Phosphorus, "the light-bringing good boy"—the Old Welsh *mapon* means "boy." The Apollo Grannus Magounus, found near Horburg, has the same meaning. In the districts inhabited by Belgic tribes we meet with Apollo Grannus—the youthful god. Apollo was the god of healing, and affected places celebrated for warm springs possessed of medicinal virtues. Dion Cassius tells us that Grannus was invoked by Caracalla as the equal of Æsculapius and Serapis.

The god and goddess Bormanus and Bormana—found also in other forms—may be connected with this Apollo.

There was a female divinity associated with Apollo, concerning whom something must be said. Her name is Sirona, and she is represented in

* Rhys, Hibbert Lectures, 1886, pp. 14-16.

bas-relief on a monument which is preserved in the Museum of Munich. She is clothed in a long dress, and resembles in general appearance the Gaulish divinities called mothers or matrons. With her right hand she holds up ears of corn, and in her left she has a bunch of fruit. On another face of the monument is represented Apollo Grannus. In his right hand he holds something like a plectrum, and in his left a very large lyre. It is not possible to determine what relation these divinities sustain to each other. We might take Sirona to be the wife of Apollo Grannus, but there is absolutely nothing to suggest their relation. Rhys thinks that the names Maponos and Magounus render such a supposition inadmissible. He suggests that she may have been regarded as his mother. There are monuments in honor of herself alone, showing that she maintained an independent position. One of these monuments, with her bust in bas-relief, gives her the appearance of extreme old age.*

The third epithet of the god is Toutiorix, which can mean nothing else than "king of the people"—a name connected at several points with German mythology and history.

Mars is the third god which Cæsar mentions.

* Rhys, Hibbert Lectures, 1886, p. 27.

Among his epithets we find most prominently named *Caturix*, which may be interpreted "king of war—lord of battles." As *Mars Vintius* he was god of the winds, but as god of the propitious winds he was assimilated with *Pollux*. He had many temples and altars along the *Rhone*. As *Mars Camulos* he was the god of the sky and of heaven, and corresponded with the *Jupiter* of the *Latins*. Many epithets prove him to have been the chief of the *Celtic* gods. He was "most kingly," and "king of the universe," and his associate—as on a monument at *Bath*—was called *Nemetona*; and *Nemon*, according to *Irish* tradition, was the wife of *Nét*, the war-god. *Lucan* speaks of the bloody rites of *Teutates*, *Hesus*, and *Taranis*, and describes a consecrated grove near *Marseilles*:

"An old, inviolated, sacred wood,
Whose gloomy boughs, thick interwoven, made
A chilly, cheerless, everlasting shade."

This *Teutates* is found in an inscription in the form *Toutates*. According to *Cæsar*, the *Gauls*, before engaging in battle, vowed to *Mars* the spoils of war, and presented in sacred places all the remainder of the booty, and few had the temerity to withhold any part of the spoils, so severe was the penalty inflicted.

There are in the inscriptions *Jupiter Bagin-*

ates and Jupiter Sucellus, but we know not the meanings of these appellations. We have also Jupiter Taranus, "the thunderer," with whom we may compare the Norse Thor. Rhys makes Taranis—remark the god of Lucan—and the Irish Toranis feminine.

The Hesus of Lucan is found as Esus, and in etymology, if not mythological bearing also, is connected with the older class of Norse divinities. Consulting the meaning of the root, and we will have "lord, the living one."

"Now where the name *Esus* occurs, it stands written over a figure of the god, which has been carefully studied by a distinguished French archæologist, M. Robt. Mowat. He describes the bas-relief as representing the god clad in a short tunic, tucked round his waist so as not to impede the free action of the body. He brandishes a square, short-hafted ax, with which he is felling or lopping a tree, the lance-like form of the leaves of which show it to be a willow, such as must have grown in abundance on the banks and islands of the Seine. M. Mowat classes this figure with the bronze images and bas-reliefs of the god known by his Latin name as Silvanus. Other representations make him hold in one hand a branch which he has just cut off a tree with a woodman's bill, while a great many monuments

give him as his attributes a hammer and a goblet; but in some instances the goblet is absent, while in others the hammer has smaller hammers growing as it were out of it in tree-like fashion—a remarkable specimen of this kind has been discovered at Vienne. The goblet and hammer sometimes accompany dedications to Silvanus by name, but the variations are too numerous to be enumerated. One of the most remarkable is an altar at Lyons, which brings the hammer and the bill-hook together; it shows the god using a bill-hook with his right hand, and supporting himself with the other on a hammer with a long handle, while the goblet stands at his feet.” *

Cæsar ascribes the initiation of the various trades and arts to Minerva. We find in the inscriptions *Minerva Balisama*. Corresponding with the character which Cæsar ascribes to Minerva, the Irish had a goddess Brigit—poetess and seeress—daughter of Dagda the Great; and she had two daughters, also called Brigit, one the patroness of the healing art, and the other of smith-work. The inscriptions furnish the Gaulish Brigands the probable counterpart of Brigit.

An altar dug up in Paris contains a figure of

* Rhys, Hibbert Lectures, 1886, pp. 64, 65.

the god Cernunnos. This may be the god Dis, who, according to Cæsar, was father of the Gallic gods. An examination of the Paris altar shows that this name suits the god. There is the word *Cernunnus*, and underneath this name a divinity is represented. This figure is bearded and clothed. The forehead is adorned with the horns of a stag, from each of which hangs a tongue. Although the monument is in a bad state of preservation, the figure is so large in comparison with the others of the block as to show that the god could not have been represented standing or even sitting on a seat. The only posture suited to the whole scene would be the cross-legged position characteristic of the Buddha.

This connects the whole figure with certain sculptures representing squatting, horned divinities. One of these, found at Vendœuvres-en-Brenne, represents the god with a *follis*, or sack, in his lap. On either side of the god stand two genii of diminutive size. Their feet rest upon the coils of a serpent. Each grasps one of the horns of the central god. With the other hand one holds a torque and the other a purse.

An adjoining face of the monument shows an Apollo Citharædus. His posture is that illus-

trated by his colossal statue at Entrain, in the Nièvre. On the Rheims monument the horned god is squatting on a seat between Apollo and Mercury, who are standing. The left arm of Cernunnos rests on his knee, and on this arm is held a bag. With his right hand he helps to pour from the bag a profusion of acorns or beech-nuts. An ox and a stag are also figured, and the nuts drop down between them. On the tympanum of the pediment, above the head of the god, a rat has been carved. Since the rat is an animal which dwells underground, its representation on the monument is thought to have significance.

The block of saints displays two groups on opposite sides of the stone. In each case the squatting god holds in his right hand a torque, and in his left a bag or purse. The latter is supported on his knee. The monument being imperfect, the horns are wanting, yet the god is probably Cernunnos.

The goddess in the principal group, seated near him, holds a cornucopia, which rests on her left arm, while close to her stands another little female divinity. On the opposite face of the block the god squats on a base, which has been ornamented with two bucraria. On a base to the left, ornamented with a bucraria, a naked

god supports himself on a club. On the right, the base is without ornament. Thereon stands a goddess in a long robe. The squatting attitude of the god in all these figures is characteristic. The same attitude has been remarked in a bronze figure which was discovered in Autun, and is now preserved in the museum of Saint Germain; also on one side of certain Gaulish coins there is a squatting figure, holding a torque in the right hand.*

This deity, like Dis and Pluto, was the god of the dead and of the lower world, and the lord of riches. In some representations, Cernunnos has two other but smaller faces on either side, and sometimes three heads. It would seem to have been the custom of beginning each meal with the religious ceremony of offering a portion of the food to Dis. He seems to have had a companion, whose Irish name was Danu or Donu, who was the mother of the gods.

Gallic cities were dedicated to presiding *genii*, the names of several of which have been preserved. The worship of mother goddesses was widely extended, and affected especially by the poor. They are represented as three young women, clad in long robes and showing a benevolent countenance. They are mostly in a sitting

* Rhys, Hibbert Lectures, 1886, pp. 78-81.

posture, with fruit on their laps, and occasionally an infant on their knees. An altar in the Museum of Vienne shows the mother with a basket of fruit on her lap, sitting, while her two sisters, with long robes which cover their heads, stand on either side. A monument, found at Metz, represents the three standing and holding in their hands fruit or flowers. There was also in Gaul the similar worship of holy virgins.

The imagination peopled Celtic lands with a multitude of malevolent spirits, all kinds of goblins and ogresses, inspiring terror in the hearts of the humble worshipers. There is but one monument in recognition of these shadowy beings. It is found at Benwell, near Newcastle on Tyne, and is, briefly, "To the witches three." These minor divinities were local, and included the spirits of forests, streams, lakes, springs, and mountains. Remains of this lower Celtic worship exist to-day in local seats, as we shall learn in the next chapter, while the greater and more noble gods are forgotten.

The classic and archæological remains harmonize with the mythology of the Celts wherever it is possible for us to make a fair comparison. Each assists to a correct understanding of the others, and yet the whole body of information is far from being what could be wished.

IV.

LITTLE PEOPLE.

THE fairies occupy a prominent place in the modern mythology of Ireland. They were once angels, according to the popular belief, and formed a large part of the original population of heaven. When the rebellion headed by Satan drew away from their allegiance multitudes of warlike spirits, the fairies remained neutral. As a punishment they were banished from heaven, and condemned to dwell in the earth, yet cherishing the hope of final pardon and admission to their former celestial abodes.

They dwell in large societies, labor on the co-operative plan, and own property in common. They are well-disposed, though capable of doing much harm. "Though, be nacher, they're not the length av yer finger, they can make thimselves the bigness av a tower when it plazes thim, an' av that ugliness that ye'd faint wid the looks o' thim, as knowin' they can sthrike ye dead on the shpot, or change ye into a dog, or a pig, or a unicorn, or any other dirty baste they plaze." Their bodies are quite ethereal in substance, so that the light can easily shine through,



and they can render themselves visible or invisible at their pleasure. Sometimes they can be heard when they can not be seen. Fairy maids wear pure white robes, and their long hair falls loosely over their shoulders. The matrons bind up their hair in a coil on their heads, and wear a band around their brow. Young gentlemen wear green jackets, and white breeches and stockings. The blossom of the foxglove makes an ever-ready, beautiful, and appropriate hat. Fairies make fine soldiers, are fond of military exercises, and are divided into hostile clans. They dwell in mounds, old castles, graveyards, ruined churches, glens in the mountains, caves in the rocks, and springs and lakes.

These fairies play at ball, and are especially fond of music and dancing. A "wise woman" describes a dance which she saw: "It was the 'cutest sight alive. There was a place for thim to shtand on, an' a wonderful big fiddle, av the size ye cud slape in it, that was played be a monstrous frog, an' two little fiddles, that two kittens fiddled on, an' two big drums, baten be cats, an' two trumpets, played be fat pigs. All round the fairies were dancin' like angels, the fireflies givin' thim light to see by, an' the moon-bames shinin' on the lake; for it was be the shore it was, an' if ye don't belave it, the glen's

still there, that they call the fairy glen, to this blessed day." *

To enter a house selected for their frolic, the little people send one of their number through the key-hole, who carries with him a thread. This is made fast to some article of furniture near the floor. Upon it, first of all, steps the piper, who plays with might and main a lively air, and one by one the whole fairy company mount the bridge and pass into the room. This account from Ulster can refer only to beings most minute.

The Pooka is an evil spirit. "Old people used to say that the Pookas were very numerous in the times long ago. They were wicked-minded, black-looking, bad things, that would come in the form of wild colts, with chains hanging about them. They did great harm to benighted travelers."

The Leprechauns are peculiar to Ireland. This being is in the form of a little old man, and is reputed to be very rich. He may be compelled, if caught, to reveal the place where he has hidden his gold; but you must not take your eyes off the prisoner for a single instant, or he will vanish.

The Leprechauns did a great deal of traveling

* McAnally, *Irish Wonders*, p. 99.

over the country, and their brogues often wore out and brought their feet to the ground. When this occurred they would sit down and mend them in the first convenient place. They were quite solitary in their habits, and seldom was more than one seen at the same time.

The fairies of the Scottish Highlands are very handsome in person, and are usually dressed in green. They enjoy themselves in dancing and singing, and make shoes and clothes in an incredibly short space of time. They borrow from the human race, whenever people are kindly disposed toward them, and are equally ready to lend from their own possessions. But they are, nevertheless, to be dreaded; for they sometimes carry off women and children—especially those who may be remarkable for their beauty—to their own fairy abodes. Here they are treated with the utmost kindness, if they are respectful and obedient. Mortals who have spent what seemed but a night at their fairy revels, have found the next morning that their night has extended to a hundred years.

“One Highlander, in passing a mountain, hears the tramp of horses, the music of the horn, and the cheering of the huntsmen, when suddenly a gallant crew of thirteen fairy

hunters, dressed in green, sweep by him, the silver bosses of their bridles jingling in the night breeze."

These fairies dwell in turrets, indistinguishable in the day, but at night frequently lighted up with great brilliancy. The "hownest" Brownies are also found in Scotland, and the Water-kelpie, in the form of a horse, decoys the unwary to mount him, and then plunges with them into the lake or river.

A favorite amusement of the Leprechauns of Ireland was to ride a sheep or goat, or even a dog, when they had long journeys to make. But the fairies of the Isle of Man prefer large horses, which they ride at utmost speed, so as sometimes to endanger their lives.

Among the fairy legends of Wales we select one located in the mountains near Brecknock, where there was a lake: "In ancient times a door in a rock near this lake was found open upon a certain day every year. I think it was May-day. Those who had the curiosity and resolution to enter were conducted by a secret passage, which terminated in a small island in the center of the lake. Here the visitors were surprised with the prospect of a most enchanting garden, stored with the choicest fruits and flowers, and inhabited by the Tylwyth Têg, or Fair

Family, a kind of fairies, whose beauty could be equaled only by the courtesy and affability which they exhibited to those who pleased them. They gathered fruit and flowers for each of their guests, entertained them with the most exquisite music, disclosed to them many secrets of futurity, and invited them to stay as long as they should find their situation agreeable. But the island was secret, and nothing of its produce must be carried away. The whole of this scene was invisible to those who stood without the margin of the lake. Only an indistinct mass was seen in the middle; and it was observed that no bird would fly over the water, and that a soft strain of music at times breathed with rapturous sweetness in the breeze of the morning.”* On one occasion a man who visited this island put a flower in his pocket, and endeavored to carry it away. But as soon as he reached the limit of the hallowed ground the flower vanished, and he lost his senses. Since that time the door has never been opened, and the Cymry have been unfortunate.

There are two principal classes of fairies in Brittany. The *Korrigan* have been identified with the nine virgin priestesses of *Mela*. They can assume any form they please, move from

* Keightley, *Fairy Mythology*, p. 408.

place to place with the rapidity of thought, cure diseases by the aid of charms, and predict the future. They are about two feet in height, and have long, flowing hair. Their only dress is a long, white veil, which they wind round their body. They are most beautiful in the evening; but by daylight their eyes appear red, their hair white, and their faces wrinkled. They are fond of music and the dance, and have excellent voices. They haunt springs, and may be seen sitting on their edge and combing their hair. "They are said to celebrate there, every returning spring, a great nocturnal festival. On the sod, at its brink, is spread a table-cloth, white as the driven snow, covered with the most delicious viands. In the center is a crystal cup, which emits such light that there is no need of lamps. At the end of the banquet a cup goes round filled with a liquor, one drop of which would make one as wise as God himself. At the approach of a mortal the whole vanishes." *

The Korred are dwarfs, with shaggy hair, wrinkled faces, deep-set bright eyes, cracked voices, hands like the claws of a cat, and feet like a goat. They are skillful smiths, and possess vast wealth.

"A number of little men, not more than a

* Keightley, *Fairy Mythology*, pp. 431, 432.

foot high, dwell under the castle of Morlaix. They live in holes in the ground, whither they may often be seen going, and beating on basins. They possess great treasures, which they sometimes bring out; and if any one pass by at the time, allow him to take one handful, but no more. Should any one attempt to fill his pockets, the money vanishes, and he is instantly assailed by a shower of boxes in the ear from invisible hands." *

We can consider none of the beings of the Celtic fairy world as essentially evil, except, perhaps, the Pookas. Though frequently mischievous, and enjoying in full measure laughable pranks and vexatious jokes, they are, when well treated, kindly disposed. They are living in this world on their good behavior, and commend themselves to kind and charitable hearts. But so superior are they to the human race in wisdom and power that they become most formidable enemies to those who do not respect their liberty and other rights.

In estimating the influence these fairy creations had upon the religious faith of our fathers, we must remember that they did not repeat their stories, as we do now, as mere literary curiosities, affording indeed a weird and fasci-

* Keightley, *Fairy Mythology*, p. 441.

nating pleasure, but awakening no emotions more sacred, and stirring to no grave deeds in the line of virtue and duty; but, on the other hand, they saw in these airy forms, veritable beings, living and acting all about them, with whom, in spite of themselves, they held most important relations, and who were capable of working in this world at least, if not indeed also in the world to come, their bliss or woe. In some sections, certain of the fairies have acquired a bad name, possibly, at first, from some accidental circumstances. We can see how that in accidental drowning primitive people might think the unfortunate victim had been seized by the water-spirit.

“Tweed said to Till,
‘What gars ye rin sae still?’
Till said to Tweed,
‘Though ye rin wi’ speed,
And I rin slaw,
Yet, where ye drown ae man,
I drown twa.’”

We can not fail to remark the close similarity between ancient and more modern Celtic mythologic beings. These fairies are but the degenerate descendants of the gods and spirits which have occupied our attention in previous chapters—degenerate in some respects, and yet

more civilized. The primitive religion became mythology, mythology became a group of legends, and legends ended in fairy tales—so, at least, our leading school of mythologists mark the steps.

V.

The Religion of the Norse.

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I.

THE MISTS OF THE WORLD'S MORNING.

THE religion of the Norse should be of more than ordinary interest to English-speaking people. It is the religion of our ancient fatherland, and the faith which inspired our sturdy ancestors. It is an important part of the priceless legacy which we have inherited from the past. Although we have forsaken the faith of our fathers for something nobler, purer, and more divine, yet it still comes near to our hearts. Sincere, earnest, manly, brave, it commands our respect. Strong, compact, concentrated, it is the religion of true men. Picturesque, bewildering, majestic, gigantic, it fascinates the imagination. Miraculous, stupendous, impetuous, tempestuous, sweeping on like a whirlwind, it moves the soul. It still lives, though in survivals sometimes obscure, in the many fireside tales current in the homes and around the firesides of these newer generations.

The study of this old faith, with its poetic and beautiful myths, can not but make us wiser, stronger, better, and happier. When we understand its language and correct its distortions, we shall find much to admire and little at which to

laugh. It will be found to be very genuine and manly in its utterances.

“It is *thought*, the genuine thought of deep, rude, earnest minds, fairly opened to the things about them, a face-to-face and heart-to-heart inspection of the things—the first characteristic of all good thought in all times.”*

In Iceland the religion of the Germanic nations has been preserved in written records. “In that strange island—Iceland—burst up, the geologists say, by fire from the bottom of the sea; a wild land of barrenness and lava; swallowed many months of the year in black tempests, yet with a wild gleaming beauty in summer-time; towering up there, stern and grim, in the North Ocean; with its snow jökuls, roaring geysers, sulphur-pools, and horrid volcanic chasms, like the waste chaotic battle-field of frost and fire—where, of all places, we least looked for a literature or written memorials, the record of these things was written down.”†

This religion formerly extended its sway not only over Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Iceland, but also over much of Germany, England, and France. It gave way gradually and reluctantly before Christianity, the Lithuanians re-

* Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero-worship*, p. 18.

† Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero-worship*, pp. 14, 15.

maining pagans, even up to the beginning of the fifteenth century.

Jacob Grimm gives cogent reasons for the belief which he holds that a common religion formerly extended over all these lands—"the undisputed and very close affinity of speech between the two races, and the identity of form in their oldest poetry; the joint possession by all Teutonic tongues of many terms relating to religious worship; the identity of mythic notions and nomenclature, which ever and anon breaks out; the precisely similar way in which the religious mythus tacks itself on to the heroic legend, the mingling of the mythic element with the names of plants and constellations, and the undeniable admixture of the old religious doctrine with the systems of law."

The prime mythology has been preserved only in Iceland. There the people cherished their native speech, sung the heroic deeds of their fathers, and held in memory the ancient faith. Christianity swept away the mythologic lore of other Germanic countries, leaving only bizarre fragments difficult to unite into any system. The main features, however, of their religion has been preserved in the literary treasures of Iceland. The German *Nibelungen-lied* and the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf* are but semi-mythological.

The religion and mythology of Iceland have been preserved in their greatest purity in the two Eddas—the Elder and the Younger. The former is written in poetry, the latter in prose. Edda is said to mean “great-grandmother,” and refers to the very ancient origin of the contents. The myths of the Elder Edda were collected from the mouths of the people by Saemund the Wise, who died in A. D. 1133, at the advanced age of seventy-seven years. The essential element of Icelandic poetry even at the present day, as in this old Edda, is alliteration.

The Younger Edda may be considered a kind of commentary on the older and more important work. It was written by Snorri Sturleson, who died in A. D. 1241 at the age of sixty-three years.

Besides the works which have been mentioned, the student of the Norse religion should consult the many Icelandic sagas and the abundant folklore of the Gothic race.

It must not be forgotten, however, that the distinguished scholar and master of the literature of the Old Norse, Professor Sophus Bugge, has put forth views as to the legends of gods and heroes which powerfully controvert the received opinions. While he admits the antiquity and indigenous character of certain mythical beings, he holds that the poems and sagas have been pro-

duced under the influence of Christian literature, and belong in their present form to the Middle Ages. Whether this bold and ably-presented opinion will win the acceptance of Norse scholars generally remains to be seen. It has certainly started up several interesting problems whose solutions will doubtless be forthcoming, possibly in the near future.

This religion recognizes the depravity of human nature and the necessity of a struggle for a purer life. It teaches the virtues of courage, faith, independence, industry, truthfulness, fidelity, caution, the desire for learning, devotion to friends, hospitality, liberality, charity, temperance, cheerfulness, modesty, politeness, respect for the aged, resignation to the will of heaven, and contempt of death. It must be conceded however, that much both of the teaching and of the practice contradict the general statement which has been made. The teaching of Odin, found in many proverbs and wise sayings, as preserved in the *Hávamál*, is worthy of its origin.

“ All door-ways
Before going forward,
Should be looked to ;
For difficult it is to know
Where foes may sit
Within a dwelling.

A firmer friend
No man ever gets
Than great sagacity.

A worse provision
On the way he can not carry
Than too-much beer-bibbing;
So good is not,
As it is said,
Beer for the sons of men.

A garrulous tongue,
If it be not checked,
Sings often to its own harm.
Speak sensibly or be silent.

A cowardly man
Thinks he will ever live
If warfare he avoids;
But old age will
Give him no peace,
Though spears may spare him.

A foolish man,
Who among people comes,
Had best be silent;
For no one knows
That he knows nothing
Unless he talks too much.
He who previously knew nothing,
Will still know nothing,
Talk he ever so much.

The welcome becomes unwelcome
If he too long continues
In another's house.

The mind only knows
What lies near the heart.

One's own house is best,
Small though it be,
At home is everyone his own master.

Man is the joy of man.

Moderately wise
Should each one be,
But never otherwise :
Of those men
The lives are fairest
Who know much well

Seldom a sluggish wolf
Gets prey,
Or a sleeping man victory.

Let one only know,
A second may not ;
If three, all the world knows.

No man lacks everything.

Cattle die,
Kindred die,
We ourselves also die ;
But the fair fame
Never dies
Of him who has earned it.

Full storehouses I saw
At Dives' sons' ;
Now bear they the beggar's staff.
Such are riches,
As is the twinkling of an eye :
Of friends they are most fickle.

If thou knowest thou hast a friend,
Whom thou well canst trust,

Go oft to visit him ;
For with brushwood overgrown
And with high grass
Is the way that no one treads.
No one gets good from a corpse.
The tongue is the bane of the head.
With thy friend
Be thou never
First to quarrel.
Care gnaws the heart,
If thou to no one canst
Thy whole mind disclose.
He is not another's friend
Who never says as he says.
Rejoiced at evil
Be thou never,
But let good give thee pleasure.
No one is so good
That no failing attends him,
Nor so bad as to be good for nothing.
At a hoary speaker
Laugh thou never.
Often is good that which the aged utter."

From such sources the Scandinavian nations drew the best part of their intellectual life. A great people was educated, and such precepts as these had their share in the work. It is possible that we owe as much of our solidity, enterprise, and freedom to the hardy Norse as we do to the Celt or Roman.

Tacitus, a careful historian, though he was sometimes greatly in error in speaking of these matters, says that "a Being, master of the universe, to whom all things were submissive and obedient, was the Supreme God of the Germans." This being was called by the general name of *God*. He was the "author of everything that existeth—the eternal, the ancient, the living and awful Being that never changeth." He was infinite in power and knowledge, and perfect in justice. He could not be represented by any image; he must not be worshiped in any temple; in consecrated groves and in the gloomy solitudes of the deep forests, the pious served him with sacrifices and prayers, and pledged themselves to live pure lives and perform brave deeds of mighty valor. This—the All-father—"He lives from everlasting to everlasting, rules over all his realm, and governs all things, great and small. He made heaven and earth, the air and all things in them. What is most important, he made man and gave him a spirit, which shall live, and never perish, though the body may turn to dust or burn to ashes. All who live a life of virtue shall dwell with him in Gimle or Vingolf. The wicked, on the other hand, go to Hel, and from her to Niflheim, that is down into the ninth world." *

* Anderson, *The Younger Edda*, pp. 54, 55.

We may compare the account of Tacitus, in which the picture is doubtless fully as fair as more careful investigation would justify.

“But it was not permitted to put to death, nor to bind, and not even to inflict blows, unless by the authority of the priests—not in the light of a judicial sentence, nor by order of a military leader, but as by the command of God, who, they believed, was present with those engaged in battle. And effigies of animals and certain banners, taken from their sacred groves, were borne with them on the field.”

“Nay, they even think that there is something sacred and prescient in the female sex. Neither do they reject their advice, nor neglect their responses, when consulted. We have seen in the reign of the now deified Vespasian, Veleda, revered for a long time as a divinity by most of her countrymen. But before her time, Aurinia, and many other women, were held in veneration—not as a mere sentiment, nor as if they would make them divinities.”

“Most especially among the gods they worship Mercury, to whom, on stated days, they deem it right to offer human victims also as sacrifices. They sacrifice to Hercules and Mars such animals as are usually slain in honor of the gods. Part of the Suevi sacrifice also to Isis.

We have too little information to enable us to determine whence are the origin and introduction of this worship, unless the symbol itself of the goddess, figured after the manner of a Liburnian galley, shows that the religion came from a foreign source. But they think that it is not consistent with the greatness of celestial beings to confine them within walls, or to give them any resemblance to the human form. They consecrate groves and woodlands, and call by the names of different deities that secret power which they see with the eye of reverential faith alone."

"They attend to auguries, and the art of divining by lots, as much as any people whatever. The usual mode of taking lots is simple. They cut into small twigs a branch taken from a fruit-tree, and these, distinguished by certain marks, they throw, without meditation and at random, upon a white garment. Then, if the lots are consulted by public authority, the priest of the canton—but if by private citizens, the master of the family—having prayed the gods and raising his eyes to heaven, takes up three slips successively, and holding them aloft, interprets according to the markings before mentioned. If the lots are unfavorable, there is no further consultation concerning the same matter on this day;

but if the lots are propitious, to this is added the sanction of auspices. They are also acquainted with that other well-known custom indeed—to consult the notes and flights of birds; but it is a peculiarity of this race to receive also presages and admonitions from horses. White studs are maintained at public expense, in these same groves and sacred places which we have before mentioned, and profaned by no human labor and harnessed to a sacred chariot, the priest and king, or chief of the State, attend and watch the motions and neighings. Greater faith is given to no other kind of augury, not only among the common people, but also among the nobility and priesthood; for they consider themselves during the ceremony as the ministers of the gods, and the horses as privy to their will. There is also another mode of taking auspices, by which they seek to ascertain the issues of important wars. They seize, by any way within their power, a captive of the nation with which they are at war, and match him with a chosen champion of their own people—each provided with weapons after the manner of his country—and the victory of this one or that one is received as the sure prognostic of the event.”

“The Semnones consider themselves the most ancient and respectable of the Suevian nations.

This belief in their antiquity is strengthened by a religious observance. On a stated day all the people of the same descent, by their deputies, go in procession into a wood, rendered sacred by the auguries taken by their fathers and the awe-inspiring associations of former times, and by the slaughter of a man, offered as a victim in the name of the whole people, they celebrate by an act of horror the beginning of their barbarous religious service. There is also another mark of reverential homage connected with the grove. No man, except he be bound with a chain as an inferior being and displaying in his own person of the divinity, is permitted to enter this sanctuary. If, by accident, any one has fallen, it is not permitted, on any account, that he should be assisted, or that he should rise. They must roll themselves along the ground. The whole superstition has reference to this: It is as though from this spot the race had its origin, and here God is the Ruler of all, and all things else are subject and dependent. The fortune of the Semnones adds to their weight and influence. They dwell in a hundred cantons, and by their vast extent of territory are entitled to consider themselves as the head of the Suevian nations."

Speaking of another group of tribes, Tacitus

says: "There is nothing worthy of special note among these several tribes, unless it be that they worship, in common, Hertha, or Mother Earth, and believe that she takes part in the affairs of men, and that she visits the different nations. There is in an island of the ocean an unpolluted grove, and in this her sacred chariot, covered by a vestment, permitted to be touched by her priest alone. He becomes conscious of the entrance of the goddess into her sacred dwelling, and follows the chariot drawn by cows yoked together. Then there are days of public rejoicing and general festivals in all places which she deems worthy of visiting, and which she honors with the privilege of her entertainment. No wars are carried on, no arms assumed, and every sword is sheathed. Then peace and quiet are so much known, then so much relished, until the same priest returns the goddess, satisfied with her visitation among mortals, to her sanctuary. Soon the chariot and the vestment and, if we may believe report, the goddess herself, are purified in a secret lake. Slaves officiate in this ablution, and the same lake immediately swallows them up. Hence there are superstitious terror and ignorance as to what those sacred mysteries can be, which those only see who are doomed to die."

“Among the Naharvali is shown a grove connected with ancient religious rites. The priest presides in a female dress; but they say that the gods worshiped there are, according to Roman interpretation, Castor and Pollux. Such are the attributes assigned to their godhead. Their name is Alci. There are no images, and no traces of foreign superstition; but they worship them as brothers, as youths.”

The Æstyans worship the mother of the gods. “As a distinctive mark of this superstition, they wear, as amulets, images in the form of wild boars. This, instead of arms and all defense, keeps the worshiper of the goddess safe even in the midst of enemies.”*

The author elsewhere mentions a sacred grove and an altar devoted to the worship of the god Tafnan. The name of this deity is found only in this passage and in one inscription. Another grove is mentioned which was a sanctuary of Hercules. The god Tuisco is found and may be the same as the native Tyr or perhaps Thor. The latter has been identified with Mars, as the god Odin also with Mercury. There is mention of the sacred forest of Baduhenna and other similar sanctuaries. Isis may be the moon-goddess, as Hertha is certainly one of the earth god-

* Tacitus, *Germania*, vii-x, xxxix, xl, xliii, xlv.

desses. The worship of Castor and Pollux may be compared with that of the earth-mother as conducted by the Corybantes, the Idæi Dactyli, and other priestly classes, in Thrace, Phrygia, and elsewhere. The Germans hymned Heracles in song when about to engage in battle, and an altar had been found at Asciburgium consecrated to Ulysses. Odin may have reminded the Romans of both the god and the hero.*

The figures of certain savage animals were deemed religious symbols. It was also a custom to deposit in their sacred groves the standards taken from the enemy, which they carried with them in their wars. In the battle between the Catti and the Hermunduri, both armies devoted prisoners and spoils of war as a sacrifice to Mars and Mercury. Mars would seem to have been reckoned as the chief deity.†

Cæsar, contrasting the Gauls and Germans, says: "The Germans differ greatly from this custom, for they neither have Druids who preside over sacred things, nor do they regard sacrifices. Of the gods they acknowledge none save those whom they can see and by whose power they are apparently benefited—Sol, Vulcan, Luna;

*Tacitus, *Germania*, ii, iii; *Annals*, i, 51; ii, 12; iv, 73; *History*, iv, 14.

†Tacitus, *History*, iv, 12, 64; *Annals*, i, 59; xiii, 57.

of the other gods they know nothing, not even by report." *

The method of divination by means of twigs is common to several nations. The soothsayers of Scythia use willow wands for this sacred purpose. The Earees employ the inner bark of the linden-tree. "They take a piece of this bark, and, splitting it into three strips, keep twining the strips about their fingers, and untwining them while they prophesy." The Scythians of Herodotus are held by some authorities to belong to the Aryan race.† The Alani divine by a similar method. "They collect a number of straight twigs of osier; then, with certain secret incantations, they separate them from one another on particular days; and from them they learn clearly what is about to happen."‡ This practice among the Magi is mentioned in the Bible. || The people of God were not free from the superstition. §

The Scordisci, probably connected with the Germanic race, sacrificed their prisoners to Bellona and Mars, and drank with eagerness human blood out of skulls. ¶

* *Cæsar*, *Gallie War*, vi, 21.

† *Rawlinson*, *Herodotus*, pp. 46, 47; 158-168.

‡ *Ammianus Marcellinus*, xxxi, ii, 24.

|| *Ezekiel* viii, 16, 17. § *Hosea* iv, 12.

¶ *Ammianus Marcellinus*, xxvii, iv, 4.

But if, as has been suggested, this religion had an underlying basis of monotheism, it was soon concealed by a rich polytheism. The forces of nature were deified. The process is not unlike that met with elsewhere again and again, and need not be particularly dwelt upon in this connection. The Norse myths, like others, must be translated in order to be understood.

The myth of the creation is worthy of careful study and comparison with the accounts found in other religions and mythologies. In the beginning was a yawning gulf yclept Ginungagap. As is said in the Vala's Prophecy :

“It was Time's morning,
When the nothing was;
Nor sand, nor sea,
Nor cooling billows;
Earth there was not,
Nor heaven above.
The Ginungagap was,
But grass nowhere.”

On the north of Ginungagap was a nebulous world Niflheim, and on the south a fire-world Muspelheim. In the middle of Niflheim was a spring Hvergelmer, from which flowed twelve ice-cold streams called Elivagar. Surt reigned in the midst of the fierce heat of the fire-world. The Elivagar froze over, and ice was formed in the northern part of the yawning gulf. Vapor

which rose above this ice became frost. The heated blast from Muspelheim thawed this rime, and the drops were quickened into a man or giant called Ymer, but whom the frost giants called Aurgelmer. While Ymer slept, from the sweat of the pit of his left arm were born a man and a woman, and one foot begat with the other a six-headed son, from whom sprang the frost giants.

From the drops of rime sprang also a cow, Audhumbla. This cow licked salt-rime stones, and on the third day these stones gave birth to a man named Bure, whose son was Bor. Bor married Bestla, the daughter of Bolthorn, and to this married pair were born three sons—Odin, Vile, and Ve, the rulers of heaven and earth.

The three brothers now killed the giant Ymer and his blood caused a deluge in which all the frost giants, save Bergelmer, were drowned. The latter saved himself in a boat. The giant's body was thrown into Ginungagap. His blood made all waters, his flesh all lands, and his bones all mountains, while his teeth and jaws became stones, his hair forests, and his skull the arch of heaven. His brains scattered in the air became clouds, and from his eyebrows they formed Midgard as a bulwark against the giants. Sparks from Muspelheim were set in the heavens to give

light to the world. Says Grimmer's Lay in the Elder Edda:

“Of Ymer's flesh
The earth was made,
And of his sweat the seas;
Rocks of his bones,
Trees of his hair,
And the sky of his skull;
But of his eyebrows
The blithe powers
Made Midgard for the sons of men.
Of his brains
All the melancholy
Clouds were made.”*

Asgard is the divine abode in which the gods built a most magnificent golden palace called Gladsheim, “home of gladness,” and for the goddesses they built Vingolf, “friend's floor.” The three beneficent gods while walking on the sea-shore discovered two trees, an ash and an elm, and made from them the first human pair, and named them from the trees Ask and Embla. They also gave them Midgard for their abode.

Ida, situated in Asgard, is the assembling place of the gods. From Hlidskjalf, Odin sitting on his lofty seat looks out upon the whole world. Far above, brighter than the highest splendors

*The translations are from Anderson, Norse Mythology, and the Younger Edda.

of the morning or noonday sun is golden Gimle, most holy and most pure. Valhal is Odin's hall, and here dwell the heroes who die in battle, and generally the brave, the good, and the virtuous.

There are twelve greater gods—Odin, Thor, Balder, Tyr, Brage, Heimdal, Hoder, Vidar, Vale, Uller, Forsete, and Loke. Njord and Frey were formerly sea-gods or *vans*, but have been adopted among the Asas. Of Vile and Ve, forming with Odin the first trinity at the creation, we hear no more. The goddesses which may, perhaps, be considered the most important are Frigg, Freyja, Nanna, Sif, Saga, Hel, Gefjun, Eir, Hlin, Lofn, Var and Snotra. There are also many dwarfs, elves, hill-people, trolls, hulder, witches, nisses, necks, princes, mermaids, stromkarls, fossegrims, and other classes of mythologic and fairy beings.

An interpretation of the myths of Creation, in their general outline, has been suggested. In the beginning there existed the Almighty All-father and nebulous matter, with various forces and relations represented by Niflheim, Muspelheim, and Ginungagap. The first step in Creation resulted in Chaos, or the giant Ymer, from whom sprung the various forms of physical nature. The cow Audhumbla represented spiritual life, and we have successively Bure and Bor, and finally a spiritual trinity, the three brothers,

Odin, Vile, and Ve, which, if we may suppose the Norse thought of the ethical import, we may interpret as Spirit, Will, and Holiness. After this first creation, the places of Vile and Ve in the divine trinity are supplied by Hœner and Loder.

When the first human pair, Ask and Embla, were created, Odin breathed into their nostrils the breath of life, Hœner blessed them with light and understanding, and their warm blood and the keenness of their senses they owed to the endowment of Loder. From Bergelmer and his wife, the giant and giantess who escaped from the flood, were descended the whole race of the frost giants. They were banished to Jotunheim and Utgard, whence they visit Midgard, and seek to injure men. They are represented as dwelling in mountains and the desert places of the earth, and are the unconquered and hostile influences of nature. They love darkness rather than light, and are greatly terrified at the cheering light of day and the swift lightning of the sky. They are said to possess abundance of wealth and many priceless treasures. They are good natured and boastful, but may easily be moved to anger; frequently they prove themselves to be powerful, wise, and stern. The bright gods wage war against them, conquer

them, and slay them—being ever victorious at the last.

The ash-tree Ygdrasil, beneath which the gods assemble every day in council, is one of the grandest figures in any mythology. Its branches spread over all worlds, and reach above the heavens. Three roots sustain the tree—one reaches Asgard, the home of the gods; the second extends to the world of the frost giants, where Ginungagap was formerly situated; and the third reaches Niflheim. Under the third root is Hvergelmer, where lives the hag Nidhug and gnaws the root. Under the second root is the well of Mimer, wherein are concealed all wisdom and all knowledge. “The owner of the well hight Mimer. He is full of wisdom, for he drinks from the well with the Gjallarhorn. All-father once came there, and asked for a drink, but he did not get it before he left one of his eyes as a pledge.” Thus says the Elder Edda:

“Full well I know,
Great Odin, where
Thine eye thou lost;
In Mimer’s well,
The fountain pure,
Mead Mimer drinks
Each morning new,
With Odin’s pledge.
Conceive ye this?”

Beneath the root in Asgard is the most sacred fountain of Urd, where the gods, riding over Bifrost, or the Rainbow, every day, hold their doomstead.

At this fountain, in a beautiful hall, dwell three maids—Urd, Urlande; and Skuld, or Past, Present, and Future—called *norns*, fates that fix the lifetime of men, the originals of the weird sisters of Shakspeare. These *norns* draw water from the fountain, and mingling it with clay, sprinkle the leaves and branches of the tree to prevent withering. The water is most holy. The dew which falls from the tree becomes honey for the bees. On one of the boughs sits a wise eagle, and between his eyes sits a hawk, called *Vedfolner*. A squirrel, called *Ratatosk*, runs up and down the trunk, causing strife between the eagle and *Nidhug*. Four stags leap about in the branches, and feed upon the leaves. “More serpents than tongue can tell” are with *Nidhug*.

This sacred tree symbolizes all existences. It carries life to every part of the universe. It is the history of the world.

“Its boughs, with their buddings and disleafings—events, things suffered, things done, catastrophes—stretch through all lands and times. Is not every leaf of it a biography, every fiber

there an act or word? Its boughs are Histories of Nations. The rustle of it is the noise of Human Existence, onwards from of-old. It grows there, the breath of Human Passion rustling through it—or storm-tossed, the storm-wind howling through it like the voice of all the gods. It is Ygdrasil, the Tree of Existence. It is the past, the present, and the future—what was done, what is doing, what will be done; ‘the infinite conjugation of the verb *To do.*’”*

Ygdrasil means “the Bearer of God.” “The picture is so grand that nothing but an infinite soul can comprehend it; no brush can paint it—no colors can represent it. Nothing is quiet, nothing at rest—all is activity. It is the whole world, and can be comprehended only by the mind of man, by the soul of the poet, and be symbolized by the ceaseless flow of language.”†

* Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero-worship*, p. 19.

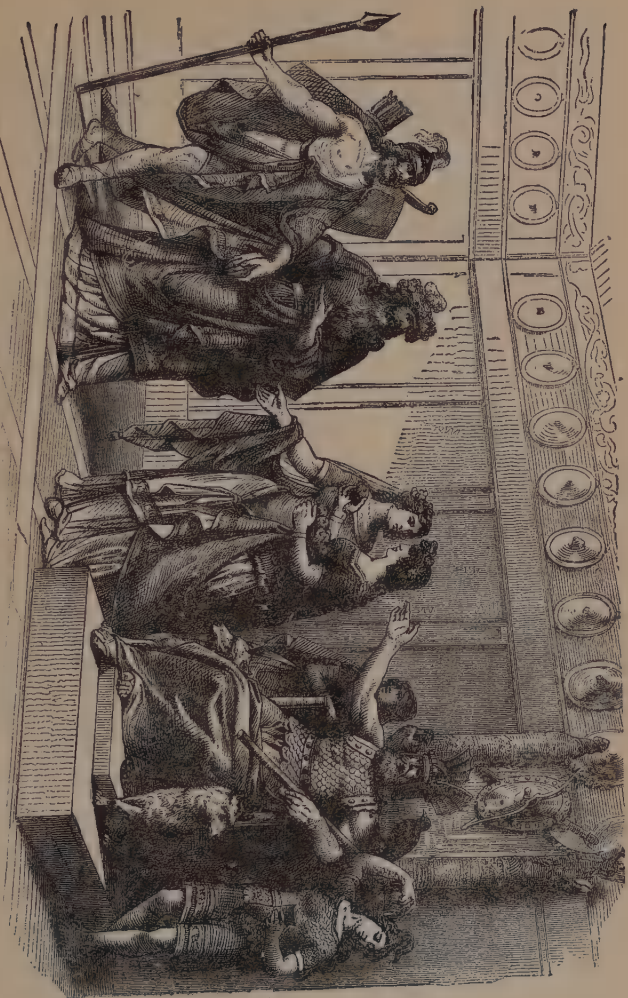
† Andersen, *Norse Mythology*, p. 208.

II.

THE WARRIOR AND THE THUNDERER.

ODIN is the chief of the gods of the Norse. He is especially the god of war, who watches over the brave, helps them in battle, and receives them at last in Valhal. He is the supreme ruler of the universe, the fountain of all knowledge, and the inventor of poetry and the runes. Odin has twelve names in Asgard—forty-nine names are given in the Younger Edda, and nearly two hundred are mentioned in the poets. He is represented as a tall, old man, with one eye, and a long beard. He wears a many-colored coat and a broad-brimmed hat, and has a spear in his hand and a ring on his finger. Two ravens sit on his shoulders, and two wolves crouch at his feet. He sits upon his lofty throne, or, mounted on his fleet steed Sleipner, rides swiftly as the wind.

Odin has been interpreted as the ever-moving, working, divine spirit of the universe. His hat represents the vault of heaven; his coat, the blue sky; and the ravens, Hugin and Munin, are reflection and memory. They fly over the world, and in the evening of each day whisper in Odin's ear all that they have seen and heard.



ODIN WELCOMES A HERO TO VALHAL.

The marvelous ring was named Draupner, and was the work of the dwarfs. Eight rings of equal weight drop from Draupner every ninth night. It symbolizes fertility of vegetable and animal life, and fertility of thought. Ideas drop one from the other, and form a golden chain of many links. If any man, however, will drink at the fountain of Mimer, as did Odin, he must purchase the draught at the price of something dear. Wisdom has a price, which he must pay who would secure the possession.

Those who live life bravely are conducted by maidens—the *valkyries*—to Odin's Hall. Here every day they ride into the court, and fight and hew one another in pieces, after which they resort to the Hall, and drink mead from the skulls of their enemies. After Ragnarok they will be admitted to golden Gimle, while the wicked and all cowards will leave Hel and go to Naastrand, "the strand of corpses." This is a cave, with its entrance far from the sun, and facing the North. It is built of wattled serpents, with their heads turned inwards. They fill the room with streams of poison, in which the unhappy dead ever wade—gory heads hanging outside their breasts, faces all horrid and bloody, poison-dragons piercing and dark ravens tearing their hearts, and their hands riveted together with

burning stones. The three principal sins—besides cowardice, which is the worst of all sins—for which the wicked suffer, are perjury, murder, and adultery.*

Many interests depended upon Odin, and in his various enterprises he traveled extensively. He bountifully bestowed his blessings upon his subjects.

“Let us Odin pray
 Into our minds to enter;
 He gives and grants
 Gold to the deserving.
 He gave Hermod
 A helm and corselet,
 And from him Sigmund
 A sword received.

Victory to his sons he gives,
 But to some riches;
 Eloquence to the great,
 And to men wit;
 Fair wind he gives to traders,
 But visions to skalds;
 Valor he gives
 To many a warrior.”

Loke, the cause of much mischief to the gods, through malice, once upon a time, cut off the hair of Sif, the wife of Thor. To save his own hide, he promised Thor to get from the dwarfs

* Anderson, Norse Mythology, p. 62.

golden hair which would grow the same as though it were natural. The dwarfs made for him not only the golden hair, but also the ship *Skidbladner*, which would insure fair wind to the owner, and could be folded like a napkin and placed in the pocket; and the spear *Gungner*, which would cause anything which it struck to tremble. Loke, who must have been in a merry mood, now wagered his head with Brok that his brother Sindre could not make three treasures of equal value. Sindre threw into the furnace a pigskin, and Brok worked at the bellows. The boar with golden bristles was made. It could run swiftly, day and night, in the air or on the sea, and it would be always light along its course. He then threw in gold, and there came out the ring *Draupner*. The third time he threw in iron. Now, Loke had tried to compel Brok to leave the bellows, changing himself into a fly, and biting the hand and the neck of the dwarf while at his labor. Now he placed himself between Brok's eyes, and stung his eyelids till he was blinded by the blood. Brok let go the bellows only a moment to brush the fly away, but it nearly destroyed the work. There came out the hammer *Mjölner*, with which the owner could strike as large an object as he pleased, and it would never fail; and he might throw it to

any distance, and it would always return to his hand. Brok took the treasures to Asgard for the decision of the gods, and Odin, Thor, and Frey were appointed judges. Loke gave Odin the spear; Thor the golden hair, which immediately grew fast to Sif's head; and Frey the ship. Brok gave Odin the ring, Thor the hammer, and Frey the boar. The judges voted the hammer the best of all the treasures, though the handle was a little short. Loke saved his head, however, by pleading that the wager did not include any part of his neck; but the dwarf sewed his lips together.

Odin had three wives—Jord, representing the original inhabited earth; Frigg, the earth cultivated by man; and Rind, the earth held fast in the frosts of winter. Frigg was the first among the goddesses, the queen of the asas and asynjes, and most dear to her husband. She possessed a magnificent mansion, Fensal; and a falcon-disguise, which, on one occasion, Loke borrowed. She has several maid-servants. Fulla cares for the slippers of her mistress, assists her at her toilet, and is a confidant to whom she intrusts all her secrets. She is represented with hair flowing over her beautiful shoulders, and a golden ribbon adorning her head. Hlyn has the care of those whom Frigg wishes to deliver from

peril. Gnaa, riding on her horse Hofvarpner, which can run through air or water, carries the messages of the goddess. Var, wise and pru-



FREYA, OR FRIGG.

dent, listens to oaths, and punishes those who keep not their promises. Lofn, mild and gracious, can remove every obstacle which prevents

the union of lovers. Sjöfn turns men's hearts and thoughts to love. Syn keeps the door of the hall, and presides at certain trials. Snotra is wise and courtly.

Rind is hard, cold, and stubborn, and Odin has great difficulty in her wooing. According to some accounts he accomplished his desire only by strategy. Says the Hávamál :

“ The mind only knows
What lies near the heart ;
That alone is conscious of our affections.
No disease is worse
To a sensible man
Than not to be content with himself.

That I experienced
When in the reeds I sat
Awaiting my delight.
Body and soul to me
Was that discreet maiden :
Nevertheless I possess her not.

Billing's lass
On her couch I found,
Sun-bright, sleeping.
A prince's joy
To me seemed naught,
If not with that form to live.

Many a fair maiden,
When rightly known,
Toward men is fickle :
That I experienced
When that discreet maiden I

Strove to win:
Contumely of every kind
That wily girl
Heaped upon me;
Nor of that damsel gained I aught."

This is nothing more than the beneficent heaven trying to woo the cold, wintry world of the north into the warmth and cheer and fruitfulness of spring and summer.

We have seen that Odin is a poet, and must now relate how he chanced to become endowed with this rare gift. There had been a long and bitter war between the asas and the vans. At last peace was declared, its terms agreed upon, and the treaty ratified by each party spitting into a jar. To commemorate the event, the gods formed out of the spittle a being named Kvaser, who was so wise that he could answer any question. While journeying through the world to teach men wisdom he was treacherously murdered by the dwarfs, Fjalar and Galar. By mixing his blood with honey, the dwarfs formed a precious drink which would inspire with the gift of song.

While the giant Gilling and his wife were visiting the dwarfs upon their special invitation, they invited Gilling to the further entertainment of a boat-ride, but capsized the boat by running

against a rock. The giant was drowned, and his wife when she heard the sad news became inconsolable. Fjalár suggested to her that she might find some consolation, if she would look out upon the waters where her husband met his death. When she passed out of the door, Galar threw down a millstone upon her head and killed her, saying that he was sick and disgusted with her crying. Such a crime was not to remain unavenged. Suttung, the son of the giant, took the dwarfs out to sea and left them on a shoal where at high tide they would be drowned, but rescued them for the inspiring beverage.

Odin learned of its existence and determined to obtain its possession. Journeying towards Jotunheim, he came to a meadow in which nine thralls were mowing. He whet their scythes with a whetstone which he carried in his belt. He gave the knives so keen an edge that the thralls wished to purchase it, but Odin threw it up into the air that it might become the property of the one who caught it. In attempting to catch it, each thrall turned in such a manner that his scythe cut off the head of one of his comrades. So the nine laborers died. The owner of the meadow was Suttung's brother, and Odin lodged with him that night, and soon engaged to do for him the work of nine men provided he—Bauge

was his name—would assist him in procuring from his brother the wonderful drink. When winter set in Odin and Bauge visited Suttung, and explained to him the nature of the agreement as to work, but he could not be prevailed upon to part with a drop of the precious verse-inspiring beverage.

The drink was preserved in a cavern under the

† P Y I T R † I R M B P R T I P
 B L P R P R † Y P L P N P I I I
 † I I P † ⊕ M I P R † S I P † Y I † R
 P † I † † † I T I I P R I R I T.

SCANDINAVIAN RUNES.

(Inscription in the Church at Fladdahlen.)

guardianship of Gunlad, Suttung's daughter. Odin had an auger called Rate, and with this Bauge bored through the rock into the cave and the god entered in the form of a worm. Assuming his natural shape he succeeded in winning the heart of the daughter, who was induced to let him drink of the mead. He drank so deep that the kettle Odroerer and the cups Sou and Bodn were all exhausted. Transforming himself

into an eagle, he flew swiftly away. Suttung learned of the divine theft, and followed in pursuit. The gods in Asgard saw him coming, and had jars ready into which he disgorged the liquor. He was so closely pursued that he sent some of the mead backwards, enough for the silly poets. But the main supply is for the poets who are poets indeed, and the gods. Saga, the goddess of history, is also much associated with Odin.

Odin was also the inventor of the runes and the author of those runic incantations so familiar in the history of Norsemen. He did not possess himself of these powerful secrets without a struggle. Nine nights he hung on Ygdrasil and sacrificed himself to himself.

“ I know that I hung
 On a wind-rocked tree
 Nine whole nights,
 With a spear wounded
 And to Odin offered,
 Myself to myself.
 On that tree
 Of which no one knows
 From what root it springs.
 Bread no one gave me
 Nor a horn of drink,
 Downward I peered,
 To runes applied myself,
 Wailing learnt them,
 Then fell down thence.

Then I began to bear fruit
And to know many things,
To grow and well thrive."

The runes of Odin were risted everywhere, and then scraped off, and mixed with the holy mead, sent to asas, elves, and sons of men in all parts of the world.

Valhal, which we have already mentioned, is situated in Gladsheim. It is a great and spacious hall, all resplendent with gold. The roof is formed with shields; the ceiling is supported by spears; coats of mail adorn its benches; swords serve the purposes of light and fire. Outside is the grove Glaser, the leaves of whose trees are red gold. The boar Sahrimner is cooked by Andhrimner in the kettle Eldhrimner every morning, and served up to the heroes of Valhal; but becomes whole every night, and is ready to be cooked again. The goat Heidrun, which stands above Odin's Hall and feeds on the wonderful tree Lerad, furnishes the whole host with rich drink. The stag Eikthyrner feeds on the leaves of the same tree, and from his broad antlers fall drops into Hvergelmer sufficient to fill the thirty-six rivers which flow thence—twelve to the home of the gods, twelve to the abodes of men, and twelve to Niflheim.

Thor, the son of Odin by Jord, is the god of



thunder, and ranks next to the chief god. He dwells in gloomy Thrudheim, in his shining palace Bilskernir, with its five hundred and forty floors, whence he sends forth upon the world his swift lightnings. He fights ever victoriously against the frost-giants, though sometimes subjected to temporary defeat. Strong, beneficent, mighty against all enemies, his exploits full of marvels, his victories many and signal, he fills a large place in the mythologic system of the Norse. He has three valuable treasures—his hammer Mjölner, wherewith the skulls of many frost-giants and mountain-giants have been split asunder; his belt of strength Meging-jarder, with which being girded his strength is doubled; and his iron gloves, with which he holds his hammer's haft. When he swings his hammer, and sends it crashing along the mountain-tops, and when his chariot wheels rumble,—this is the voice of thunder. When he blows through his beard, it is the roar of the storm. When he knits his brows, it is the dark and threatening storm-cloud. When his hammer strikes fire, as it crashes along from rock to rock; when the goats which draw his chariot strike fire with their hoofs, or by grinding their teeth together,—this is the lightning. When his eyes blaze and flash, it is the scarlet cloud. The mythology of

the German races is full of stories of his wrath, his prowess, his journeys, his battles, and his victories.

“Wide is the contrast between Woden and Thunder in the lays of the earlier poets. Thor is a less complex divinity, with a well-marked and individual character; the friend of man, the husbandman’s god, whose wrath and anger are ever directed against the evil powers that injure mortals and their possessions, whose bolt destroys the foul, thick blights that betray the presence of the wicked ones, and smites through the huge cloud-masses that seem to be crushing the earth. Thus we see him ever associated with Earth, who bore him to heaven. . . . The homely features of Thor’s character mark him out for humorous treatment, and the anonymous Aristophanes of the West, and Snorri himself, deal so with him. Alone of all the gods, we find his image carved on stocks and stones—a long-bearded face, with the hammer hung beneath; and the hammer itself, a primitive, stone-headed, short-hafted instrument, is found separately as a charm. The ‘Anse,’ or ‘the god of the country—or ‘the mighty god’ in the old carmina of oaths and vows—always refers to Thor. It is curious to notice how ill the sturdy farmer’s friend suits the new Walhall. The poets

get out of the difficulty by making him stay away fighting giants; his uncouth might is scarcely needed, when Woden has a host of chosen warriors ever ready to defend himself and his friends.”*

Odin, riding on his wonderful horse Sleipner, had reached the home of a mighty giant, Hrungner, who dwelt in Jotunheim. The latter paid a high compliment to the horse, when Odin, in his pride, said that he would wager his head that no such horse could be found in Jotunheim. The giant admitted the excellent qualities of the horse, but said that his own horse, Goldfax, was superior; and mounting the fleet steed, started in pursuit of Odin, who galloped away toward Asgard. The god kept ahead, but the giant worked up so great a momentum of speed and excitement that, before he was aware of it, he found himself in Asgard. The gods entertained him magnificently, and when he became mellowed with the mead, which he drank in enormous quantities, he took to vain boasting—threatening to drink up all the mead, demolish Asgard, and kill all the gods except Freyja and Sif, whom he would take home. The gods became tired of his arrogance, and called Thor, who had gone eastward to crush trolls. Thor came, and

* Rhys, *The Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 645, 646.



seeing the condition of affairs, blazed with anger. He would have slain the giant with his hammer, but would not take advantage of the fact that his foe was unarmed. Hrungner challenged him to a fair duel, and went home to get his weapons. The gods, it would appear, feared that if Thor were victorious, he would, in the freshness of his rage, ill-treat all the gods of Asgard. So they made a man of clay of vast proportions, and placed in his breast the heart of a mare, which, however, fluttered and trembled at the appearance of Thor. Hrungner had a sharp, three-cornered heart, as hard as a stone. His head was equally hard, and so was his shield. The clay giant, which stood at his side, was so terrified that sweat poured from his body. Thor was accompanied by his servant Thjalfe, who persuaded the giant to put his shield beneath his feet, saying that Thor would attack him from that direction. Amid flashing lightning and rolling thunder Thor rushed forward and hurled his hammer. At the same time Hrungner threw his immense flint-stone. The two weapons met in mid-air. The stone broke into two pieces; one piece fell to the ground, and the other piece struck the head of Thor and knocked him flat to the ground. The hammer crushed the skull of the giant into small pieces, and he fell in

such a position that his foot lay across Thor's neck. Thjalfe, who had slain the clay giant, was not able to take away Hrungner's foot. No one of the gods could lift the foot. At length Magne, the son of Thor and Jarnsaxa, came, and threw it off quite easily, saying that if he had been present he thought he could have slain the giant with his fist.

When Thor had returned to Thrudheim, he employed a noted sorceress to remove the flint-stone from his forehead. Her name was Groa, and she was the wife of Orvandel the Wise. She had nearly removed the stone, when Thor, to please her, related how he had waded the rivers Elivagar, bearing her husband on his shoulders in a basket, from Jotunheim; how one of his toes had stuck through a hole in the basket, and had frozen, and how he broke it off and threw it up into the sky, and it became the star called Orvandel's Toe. Furthermore he told her that her husband would soon return. Groa became so happy at the glad news that she quite forgot all her enchantments, and the stone, though somewhat loosened, still remained in Thor's forehead; and whenever any one throws a flint-stone across the floor, this stone in Thor's head moves, and produces great pain.

One day Thor took Loke on a journey in a car

drawn by his two goats. At night they stopped at a peasant's cottage and cooked the goats for supper. This peasant had a son and a daughter—Thjalfe and Roskva. Thor directed them to put the bones of the goats into their skins. In the morning he raised the goats by the use of his hammer, but one of them was lame, for Thjalfe had broken the shank bone to obtain the marrow. The peasant appeased the anger of the god by giving his children to become the servants of the Thunderer forever. They journeyed all day, and at night found lodging in an empty house, the door of which took up the whole of one side. At midnight there was a great earthquake, and the company fled for safety into an inner room, Thor standing in the doorway with his hammer in his hand. In the morning they went out and saw a great giant lying near, whose snoring had caused the rumbling and roaring and disturbance of the night. The giant awoke, and, to a question, answered that his name was Skrymer. He at once recognized the Thunder-god. The house in which the company had lodged was his mitten, the thumb of which was the inner chamber. They all traveled together during this day and at night selected a place to sleep beneath an oak. Skrymer had carried the provisions in his own sack. He had eaten his supper and had

fallen asleep, when Thor attempted to open the sack, but was not able to untie the string. Angry at his failure he struck the giant on the head with his hammer. Skrymer awoke, and asked whether a leaf had not fallen on his head. Again sleeping, he snored so outrageously that the noise filled the whole forest. Thor gave him another blow, this time the hammer sinking into his forehead up to the very handle. He again awoke and inquired whether an acorn had not fallen. Toward morning the Thunder-god struck him a third time, and he thought that birds must have been roosting in the tree and had loosened some moss. That morning he bade Thor good-bye, and disappeared in the woods.

Thor and his companions still journeyed towards Utgard and at noon came to a vast castle, which they entered by creeping between the bars of the gate. A multitude of men of immense size were sitting on two benches; and Utgard-Loke, their king, addressed Thor scornfully, calling him a "little stripling." A trial of feats was proposed. A trough full of meat was brought in, and Loke placed at one end, and Loge at the other. They met in the middle, but Loge had eaten not only all the bones, but even the trough itself, and was declared the winner. Then Thjalfe ran three races with Hugi, but lost each

race. Thor now suggested that he could do something wonderful in the way of drinking. Utgard-Loke gave him a horn, which he should have emptied at one draught; but though he drank as long as his breath would last three separate times, he seemed scarcely to have diminished the contents. The king of the giants could not restrain his supreme contempt for such puny strength. He said that, for the amusement of children, he had sometimes asked the little ones to lift his cat, but a young man would consider it nothing but play. He, however, proposed it to Thor; but the god, though exerting himself to the uttermost, was able to raise but one foot of the cat from the floor. The anger of Thor was now thoroughly roused, and he challenged any of the company to a bout with him at wrestling. The king of the giants called in Elle, his nurse, a toothless old hag, who, after a violent struggle, brought Thor to his knees, and was declared the winner. Thus ended the trials of strength, and most humiliating were these to the Thunderer and his companions.

Utgard-Loke accompanied Thor and his friends out of the castle, and in parting with them said: "Now, I will tell you the truth, since you are out of my castle, where as long as I live and reign you shall never re-enter, and you may rest

assured that had I known before what might you possessed, and how near you came plunging us into great trouble, I would not have permitted you to enter this time. Know, then, that I have all along deceived you by my illusions, first, in the forest, where I arrived before you, and there you were unable to untie the provision-sack, because I had bound it with tough iron in such a manner that you could not discover how the knot ought to be loosened. After this you gavè me three blows with your hammer; the first one, though it was the least, would have ended my days had it fallen on me, but I brought a rocky mountain before me, which you did not perceive; but you saw near my castle a mountain in which were three square glens, the one deeper than the other, and those were the marks of your hammer. I have made use of similar illusions in the contests you have had with my courtiers. In the first, Loke was hungry and devoured all that was set before him; but Loge was in reality nothing else but wild-fire, and therefore consumed not only the meat, but the trough which contained it. Huge, with whom Thjalfe contended in running, was my thought, and it was impossible for Thjalfe to keep pace with it. When you tried to empty the horn you performed indeed an exploit so marvelous that, had I not seen it my-

self, I should never have believed it. The one end of the horn stood in the sea, which you did not perceive, and when you come to the shore you will see how much the ocean has diminished by what you drank. This is now called the ebb. You performed a feat no less wonderful when you lifted the cat. To tell the truth, when we saw that one of his paws was off the floor we were all of us terror-stricken; for what you took for a cat was in reality the great Midgard-serpent, that encompasses the whole earth, and he was then barely long enough to inclose it between his head and tail, so high had your hand raised him up toward heaven. Your wrestling with Elle was also a most astonishing feat, for there never yet was, nor will there ever be, a man for whom Old Age—for such in fact was Elle—will not sooner or later lay low, if he abides her coming.”*

Æger, the terrible, the god of the raging sea, visited the asa-gods, and invited them to pay him a visit in return. It is his custom to entertain the gods each harvest. They enter his hall which is lighted up with gold as Valhal is lighted up with swords. Æger has no kettle large enough to hold all the ale which will be needed at this feast of the gods. Tyr says: “East of the rivers Elivagar, near the borders of heaven,

* Anderson, Norse Mythology, pp. 320-322.

dwells the dogwise Hymer, and this my father has a kettle which is strong and one rast (mile) deep." This he thinks can be secured by stratagem. Together with Thor, he goes to Hymer's hall, where he finds his grandmother, an evil giantess, with nine hundred heads; also his mother, a beautiful woman, who brings him a drink. By advice, the guests conceal themselves under the kettles in the hall.

Hymer comes home late from fishing, and his wife informs him of the presence of the guests. He glances towards the place where they are concealed, and the post is broken at his look, the great beam falls, and the kettles are all dashed in pieces—all save one, hard and strong, which remained still unharmed. Three steers are killed, and served on the table; and Thor eats two of these.

Next morning Hymer and Thor go fishing, and row so far from the shore that the heart of the giant is filled with terror; but he soon has the fortune to catch two whales. Meantime Thor has baited his hook with the head which he had wrung from the great bull Himinbrjoter, or "Heaven-breaker." The Midgard-serpent, which has grown so large as to encircle the whole earth, takes the bait, and the hook strikes into his palate. Thor puts on his divine strength, and pulls

so hard at the line that his feet go through the bottom of the boat, and he stands on the ground at the bottom of the sea. The awful serpent is drawn up to the side of the boat, and spouts floods of venom at the god, who, in turn, darts looks of divine wrath at the eyes of his enemy. Thor raises his hammer; but the giant cuts the line, and the serpent sinks out of sight. Thor, enraged at the cowardice of Hymer, gives him so sound a blow on the ear with his fist that he falls headlong into the sea.

Thor now takes up the boat, and carries it to the house of the giant. Hymer challenges the god to other exhibitions of strength, and requests him to break his goblet. Thor throws it through some large posts, but it receives no harm. He is told to try it against Hymer's forehead. He hurls it with all his strength. It is broken, but Hymer's forehead is uninjured. Another trial of strength is to bring the kettle out of the hall. Thor lifts it, and his feet crash through the floor of the hall. He puts it on his head like a hat, and walks off with it, the rings hanging down to his heels. The giants pursue him, but he slays them with his hammer. Now Æger can brew ale for the gods.

III.

GODS AND NO-GODS.

BALDER, the son of Odin and Frigg, is the favorite among all the gods. He is kind, wise, eloquent, and so fair and dazzling in personal appearance that light seems to issue from his body. He dwells in the pure, heavenly mansion Breidablik.

Once upon a time he had a dream which troubled him so much that he related it to the gods. They feared for his personal safety, and resolved to use all means within their power to guard him against every peril. Frigg exacted an oath from all things—trees, weapons, stones, diseases, beasts, birds, fire, water—that they would not injure Balder. She did not visit a small mistletoe that grew west of Valhal, because she thought it too weak to do any harm. Odin was not fully satisfied with these precautions. He visited Niflheim, riding fleet Sleipner. The dog of Hel barked at him, but permitted him to pass, and he reached the grave of a prophetess. Calling her up by incantations, he propounded the question which was disturbing

his mind. His worst fears were confirmed. Loke was to become the bane of Balder. But already every precaution had been taken, and nothing more could be done.

When the gods knew that Balder had been rendered invulnerable, as a sport they tried all kinds of weapons upon him in vain. Thus they thought they were doing him special honor. Some hurled darts at him, others hurled stones; some hewed at him with swords, others with battle-axes. Loke became jealous and angry. Under the disguise of a woman, he visited Frigg in her palace, and learned from her the secret of the mistletoe. This he procured, and, placing it in the hand of blind Hoder, directed his aim in the sport of the gods, and Balder was slain. Loud and long were the lamentations called forth at the death of the mild and beneficent god. His body was placed in his own ship Ringhorn, and, with the help of a giantess, Hyrroken, who was summoned from Jotunheim, the ship was launched. Nanna, the wife of Balder, died of grief, and her body was placed on the same pile. A vast concourse attended the funeral. At the request of Frigg, Hermod, the son of Odin, journeyed to Hel, to endeavor to procure permission for Balder to return to Asgard. He rode nine days and nine nights through deep, dark valleys,

when he reached a bridge, covered with glittering gold, which spanned the river Gjøl. From Modgud, a maiden who kept the bridge, he learned that Balder had crossed, and that the road led northward and downward. Hastening ever onward, he reached Hel at last, and his horse Nimble cleared the wall at a single bound. Entering the palace of Hel, he found his brother, who occupied an honorable position in this gloomy realm. He made known his mission. Hel replied that if everything in the world would weep for Balder, she would permit him to return to Asgard. All things, animate and inanimate, wept except one giantess, Thok by name—she may have been Loke in disguise—who said :

“Thok will weep
With dry tears
For Balder’s death.
Neither in life nor in death
Gave he me gladness.
Let Hel keep what she has.”

The myth of Balder is easily understood. Balder is the sun, Loke is fire, and Hoder is darkness. All nature loves light, is attracted towards it, and weeps when it is gone. In an ethical sense Balder may be the heavenly light of the soul. The light of innocence is invulnerable save only

when touched by the cruel darts of slander and jealousy.

Nanna, the wife of Balder, is the goddess of flowers, and dies with the summer.

Anderson, whose interpretations we are following, says: "Upon the whole we may say that a sun-myth first represents the death of the day at sunset, when the sky is radiant as if dyed in blood. In the flushing morn, light wins its victory again. Then the same myth became transferred to the death and birth of summer. Once more it is lifted into a higher sphere, while still holding on to its physical interpretation, and is applied to the world year. Finally, it is clothed with ethical attributes, becomes thoroughly anthropomorphized, and typifies the good and the evil, the virtues and the vices (light and darkness) in the character and life of gods and men. Thus we get four stages in the development of the myth."*

Such is the beautiful myth of Balder. It may be well doubted whether many of the sturdy Norse saw all this in the myth, yet it may have been the secret of the few.

Forsette, the son of Balder and Nanna, dwells in the heavenly mansion Glitner, with its golden columns and silver roof. Most important cases

* Anderson, *The Younger Edda*, pp. 265, 266.

are brought to his tribunal of justice, and he reconciles, to their perfect satisfaction, all disputants at law.

Heimdal, the son of Odin, is an important god. He had nine mothers, who were sisters. "An ancient god is Heimdal, from whom the Amals spring. There are strange lost myths connected with him; his struggle with Loki for the Brisinga necklace, the fight in which they fought in the shape of seals. He is 'the gods' warder,' dwelling on the gods' path, the rainbow. There he sits, 'the white god,' 'the wind-listening god,' whose ears are so sharp that he hears the grass grow in the fields and the wool on the sheeps' backs, with his Blasthorn, whose trumpet-sound will ring through the nine worlds; for, in the later legends, he has some of the attributes of the Angel of the Last Trumpet. His teeth are of gold; hence he is 'stud-endowed.' Curious genealogical myths attach themselves to him. He is styled the son of nine mothers; and as Rig's father, or Rig himself, the 'walking or wandering god,' he is the father of men and the sire of kings, and of earls and ceorls and thralls alike. His own name is epithetic, perhaps the world-bow."*

Brage is also the son of Odin and is celebrated

* Rhys, *The Hibbert Lectures*, 1886, p. 83.

for his wisdom, eloquence, and gracefulness of speech. He is a skillful poet, and runes are risted on his tongue. His wife is Idun, and she it is who keeps the golden apples which the gods have only to taste to insure to them perpetual youth. One day when Odin, Loke, and Hoener were on a journey, they came to a herd of cattle grazing in a valley, and killed one for their supper. But boil it however much they might, the flesh ever remained raw. An eagle from an oak-tree told them that if she could have a share in the feast the ox would soon boil. They consented, and the eagle flew down and snatched the two thighs and the two shoulders. Loke, angry at this greed, struck the bird on the back with a pole. The pole stuck fast to the eagle, and he was not able to let go his hold, and so was borne away, over mountains and forests, until he was seriously mangled and torn by this rough usage. The eagle was the giant Thjasse in his eagle plumage. Now, to secure his release, Loke agreed to procure for the giant the golden apples. Upon returning to Asgard, he prevailed upon Idun to take her apples into the forest, to compare them with apples which he said he found growing there, and which he considered much fairer than her own. Thjasse, in eagle form, caught up Idun and bore her away to Jotunheim. The apples being gone, the gods

began to grow old. When inquiry was made, Loke was found to be the cause of their dire misfortune, and they threatened him with instant torture and death. He promised to return the apples, and borrowed from Freyja her eagle plumage. Thus clad, he flew away to Jotunheim, and transforming Idun into a nut, he brought her in his claws to Asgard. Thjasse was in hot pursuit, but the gods lighted a fire on the walls of Asgard, which caught his plumage. He fell into their power and was slain. His daughter Skade came to avenge his death, but the gods were able to appease her wrath and make atonement for the deed. Part of the arrangement was that she was to select from the gods a husband, their feet alone being visible. She picked out a beautiful pair of feet and thought that they could belong to none other than Balder, but she was deceived. They were the feet of Njord, and he became her husband.

Tyr is the god of martial honor—brave, valourous, intrepid, wise. He is all courage and faithfulness, a worthy son of Odin.

Vidar is the son of Odin and the giantess Grid. This god rivals in strength Thor himself. He has an iron shoe which is very thick, the material for which has been gathered through all the ages. Waste scraps of leather have been util-

ized in making this shoe. The shoemaker confers a benefit on the gods, who throws away pieces of leather whereby this wonderful shoe can be kept in repair. Vidar is surnamed the Silent, and represents the wild desert and impenetrable



TYR, SON OF ODIN AND FRIGG.

forest, all untrodden by man. Vidar and Vale alone survive the general destruction at the last day. Vale is a valiant warrior.

Uller is the son of Sif and the stepson of Thor. He is skillful in the use of the bow, swift on his snow-skates, beautiful in person, and a great warrior. He dwells in his mansion called Ydaler or "Valleys of Rain."

“Hoder hight one of the asas, who is blind, but exceedingly strong; and the gods would wish that this asa never needed to be named, for the work of his hand will long be kept in memory both by gods and men.” We have seen how he became the innocent cause of the death of Balder.

Two goddesses whose names have been omitted are worthy of mention. Gefjun is a maid, and all who die unmarried become her servants. She afforded pleasure to King Gylfe of Sweden, and received in return as much land as she could plow with four oxen in one whole day. She put four oxen from Jotunheim—they were her sons by a giant—before the plow. They made a deep furrow, and, tearing up the land, drew it westward; and the goddess gave it, in its new position, the name of Zealand. She doubtless is the goddess of agriculture. Eir is a goddess of whom we have little knowledge, except that she is well skilled in the healing art.

Æger is the god of the wild, raging, deep sea. He possesses a hall of bright gold, where he entertains the gods. Ran, his wife, catches those who venture far out to sea in her net. The waves are her nine daughters. They have pale locks, wear white veils, rejoice when the wind blows most fiercely, lash the sounding shores, and

play around the rocky islands, or, in calm weather, sleep upon the stones and rocks beneath the waters. Æger wears a helmet of dense darkness and awful breakers, and Ran is the plunderer of the deep—the daughters are the most happy in the most dangerous storm.

Njord is a van born and bred in Vanaheim, but given to the asas as a hostage in exchange for Honer. Thus peace was re-established between the asas and the vans. Njord is god of the sea, of fishing, and of commerce, and is especially invoked by fishermen and sailors. He dwells in a heavenly region, Noatun, rules the winds and the tempests, and checks the fury of the raging conflagration. We have seen how he married Skade, the daughter of the giant Thjasse. She loves the rocky mountains of Thrymheim, "*the roaring home, at the thundering waterfall.*" By agreement, Njord and Skade dwell nine nights in Thrymheim and then three in Noatun. This god ruled over many temples and high places, and possessed vast wealth, which he could confer on his worshipers.

Njord has two children—Frey and Freyja. Frey is the god of rain and sunshine and of all the fruits of the earth, and, like his father, dispenses among men riches and peace. In his early boyhood the gods made him a present of

Alfheim, the home of the elves. His ship Skidbladner, made by the sons of Ivald, has been mentioned. It was so large that all the gods, with their weapons and war-stores, could find accommodation therein. Frey had a fine reputation among the gods. Njord could boast:

“It is my consolation—
For I was from a far-off place,
Sent as a hostage to the gods—
That I begat that son
Whom no one hates,
And who is regarded
Chief among the gods.”

And Tyr says:

“Frey is the best
Of all the chiefs
Among the gods.
He causes not tears
To maids or mothers;
His desire is to loosen the fetters
Of those enchained.”

Frey was extensively worshiped in all Northern countries, received many sacrifices, and had many temples and images. “On Jul-eve (Christmas eve) it was customary to lead out a boar, which was consecrated to Frey, and which was called the atonement boar. On this the persons present laid their hands, and made solemn vows; and at the feast, where the flesh of the sacri-

ficed animal was eaten by the assembled guests, there was drunk, among other horns, a horn to Njord and Frey for prosperous seasons and for peace." There are still survivals of these pagan sacrifices.

"A highly-valued wooden statue or image of Frey was found in a temple at Trondhjem, which King Olaf Tryggvesson hewed in pieces in the presence of the people. Kjotve the Rich, king of Agder in Norway, one of the chiefs who fought against Harald Fairhair, had a weight upon which the god Frey was sculptured in silver. This treasure, which he held in great veneration, fell, after the battle, into the hands of King Harald, and he presented it to his friend, the chieftain Ingemund Thorstenson, who afterwards carried the image in a purse, and held it in very high esteem. This last-mentioned image was probably borne as an amulet, as was often the case, no doubt, with the gold bracteates which are found in the grave-houes and in the earth, having upon them the images of men and animals, and which are furnished with a clasp for fastening to a necklace."*

Frey one day sat in Hlidskjalf, and looking away to Jotunheim, saw a maid enter a large palace, and as she raised the latch of the door,

* Anderson, *Norse Mythology*, p. 363.



HEATHEN TEMPLE NEAR STRASBURG, GERMANY.

all worlds were illuminated by the matchless radiancy of her hand. The god was enamored, and upon inquiry found that the wonderful maiden was Gerd, a daughter of Gymer and Aurboda, who were relatives of Thjasse. He sent his messenger Skirner to press for him his suit, who won the heart of the maiden; not, however, without the employment of irresistible incantations, in which he seems to have been well skilled. Many Norse romances are connected with this story of Frey and Gerd. The most celebrated is the *Nibelungen Lay*. That charming favorite of the children, "Sleeping Beauty," may be placed in the same class.*

Freyja is the sister of Frey, and is the goddess of love. From her mansion *Sessrymner*, she rides forth in a car drawn by two cats. She married *Oder*, by whom she had two daughters—*Hnos* and *Gerseme*, beautiful and precious. Her husband, wishing to travel abroad, left her, and since that time she continually weeps, and her tears are drops of pure gold. She is a goddess of great beauty, grace, modesty, and purity. The most beautiful things are named after her. Not only is gold called her "tears" or the "rain" of her brows and cheeks, but also the

* *Forestier*, *Echoes from Mist-land*; Introduction, pp. xliii-xlvii.

most beautiful flowers are named from her hair and eye-dew, and the butterfly is "Freyja's hen." She gives name to Friday, as Tyr to Tuesday, Odin to Wednesday, and Thor to Thursday. Freyja rides to the field of battle, and claims half of the slain.

"Folkvang 't is called,
Where Freyja has right
To dispose of the hall-seats.
Every day of the slain
She chooses the half,
And leaves half to Odin."

The Scandinavian race, like every other, struggled with the problem of evil, but struggled in vain. At first they may have thought only of physical evil, but soon their attention was directed to moral evil. The darkest spiritual evil is represented in Utgard-Loke. Asa-Loke "is the same evil principle in all its various manifestations; but, as he makes his appearance among the gods, he represents evil in the seductive and seemingly beautiful form in which it glides about through the world. We find him flowing in the veins of the human race, and call him sin, or passion. In nature he is the corrupting element in air, fire, and water. In the bowels of the earth he is the volcanic flame, in the sea he appears as the fierce serpent, and

in the lower world we recognize him as pale death.”*

We have seen how Loke procured the death of Balder. In like manner, by his strength and deceit, in connection with the jötuns, he brought the gods into peril time and again, though the evil which he intended was frequently overruled for good.

Loke had not been evil from the first. He was one of the second trinity, and, under the name of Loder, assisted Odin and Honer in the creation of man.

From Augerbode, a mighty giantess of Jotunheim, Loke had three monstrous children—the Fenris-wolf, the Midgard-serpent, and Hel. When the gods learned of the existence of these monsters, mortal terror seized upon the court of Asgard. The three children were brought from Jotunheim, and their destruction decreed. The Midgard-serpent was cast headlong into the sea, but soon grew to such a size as to encircle the whole earth. Hel was cast into Niflheim, but there extended her influence till she ruled over nine worlds. “Her hall is called Elvidner, ‘place of storm;’ hunger is her table, starvation her knife, delay her man-servant, slowness her maid-servant, precipice her threshold, care her

* Anderson, *Norse Mythology*, p. 372.

bed, and burning anguish forms the hangings of her apartments. The one-half of her body is livid, the other half the color of human flesh." *

The gods endeavored to bind the Fenris-wolf, but he broke every chain, though made of the toughest iron. At last the dwarfs made a chain called Gleipner, of cunning workmanship. It was wrought of "the noise made by the foot-step of a cat, the beard of a woman, the roots of the mountains, the sinews of the bear, the breath of the fish, and the spittle of birds." The wolf now refused to be bound. Tyr at length placed his hand in his mouth as a pledge that the gods would release him in case he should fail to break the chain. The wolf now consented, and was bound. He struggled in vain to free himself. The gods had him within their power, but Tyr lost one hand. They then bound him to two great rocks, fixed deep in the earth, and placed a fierce sword between his open jaws.

The Fenris-wolf is interpreted to mean consuming fire, the Midgard-serpent is the stormy sea, and Hel is death.

When Æger entertained the gods at a banquet, as we have already mentioned, all were present save Thor, who was away fighting trolls.

* Anderson, Norse Mythology, pp. 382, 383.

The servants are praised for their attentiveness, but this excites the wrath of Loke, who slays one of the number, and flees to the woods. He soon returns, and begins to abuse the other gods.

“Thirsty I hither
To the hall came—
Long way I journeyed—
The gods to ask
Whether one would grant me
A drink of the precious mead.

Why are ye silent, gods,
And sit so stubborn?
Have ye lost your tongues?
Give me a seat
And place at the banquet,
Or turn me away.”

He continues his abuse, and before he drinks the mead, the mountains quake and tremble. It is the footsteps of Thor, who soon enters the hall, and threatens to crush every bone in Loke's body. With an awful curse upon Æger, Loke flees, and hides himself in the mountains. A house is built, with every side open, so that he may watch the approach of the offended gods. During the daytime he changes into the form of a salmon, and hides under the waters of a cascade. One day while Odin was seated in lofty Hlidskjalf, he discovered Loke knitting flax and yarn into a fish-net, and the gods came upon him

so suddenly that he had barely time to throw the net into the fire and escape. Kvaser the Wise discovers in the ashes the traces of the net, and the gods are enabled to knit one after the same pattern. They fish for Loke, for, in the form of a salmon, he has taken his hiding-place in the water. With much difficulty Thor at length catches him in his hand, as he attempts to leap over the net. He is caught in his own device.

They drag him into a cavern, wherein they have placed three pointed rocks. They bore a hole into each of these rocks. They seize his children—Vale and Nare. They change Vale into a wolf, and compel him to tear in pieces and devour his brother. They make bands of the intestines, with which they bind the evil god to the points of the rocks. The giantess Skade suspends a serpent over him, so that the venom falls full into his face, drop by drop. His wife, Sigyn, faithful to him in his misfortune, catches the venom in a cup, which she empties when filled; but while she empties the cup, the drops fall on Loke, and he shrieks with anguish, and twists his body in his agony so that the whole earth quakes. There this evil god—so terrible a character that the Black Death of the fourteenth century assumed his form in the minds

of the Norsemen—there he will remain till the End.

We have named several lesser objects of superstition, and they deserve further attention. Both giants and dwarfs shun the light of day, and turn into stone at its approach. Dwarfs are deformed and diminutive, dusky, and coarsely clad—"a little black man," "a little gray man." The women spin and weave; the men are smiths. In Norway, rock-crystals are called dwarf-stones, and certain stones in Denmark are called dwarf-hammers. The dwarfs are extremely rich, and have fine dwellings, decorated with crystal and gold. They are neighborly and obliging, but will lame cattle and steal, and even carry to their homes young maidens.

In Iceland they use for their dwellings rocks, hills, and even seas. They keep their homes neat, and all their domestic utensils clean and orderly. In Shetland the Trows are small, and usually dressed in gay green garments. When they travel, they ride on bulrushes through the air. "If a person should happen to meet them when on these journeys, he should, if he has not a Bible in his pocket, draw a circle round him on the ground, and in God's name, forbid their approach."

The white elves are fair and lively, dwell in

the air, dance in circles on the wet grass, and sit on the leaves of the trees. Certain trees which they are thought to frequent are protected as something sacred. The dark elves are bad and mischievous. They cause diseases among cattle, called elf-fire or elf-shot. Their exhalations are injurious. If at midnight any one enters within the circle of the Swedish elves, they play him all kinds of pranks. They often sit on small stones, which are hollowed in circular form, and called elf-querns or millstones. The hill-people dwell in hills and caves. Their soft, sweet music, dull and mournful in sound, may sometimes be heard. Norse fiddlers sometimes play the tunes. If, however, they play the elf-king's tune, all objects, animate and inanimate, begin to dance, and can not stop unless the tune is played backwards, or the fiddle-strings are cut to stop the music.

The inhabitants of Rügen believe in three kinds of dwarfs—the white, the brown, and the black.

“The white are the most delicate and beautiful of all, and are of an innocent and gentle disposition. During the winter, when the face of nature is cold, raw, and cheerless, they remain still and quiet in their hills, solely engaged in the fashioning of the finest works in silver and gold,

of too delicate a texture for mortal eyes to discern. Thus they pass the winter; but no sooner does the spring return than they abandon their recesses, and live through all the summer above ground, in sunshine and starlight, in uninterrupted revelry and enjoyment. The moment the trees and flowers begin to sprout and bud in the early days of spring, they emerge from the hills, and get among the stocks and branches, and thence to the blossoms and flowers, where they sit and gaze around them. In the night, when mortals sleep, the White Dwarfs come forth, and dance their joyous roundels in the green grass, about the hills and brooks and springs, making the sweetest and most delicate music, bewildering travelers, who hear and wonder at the strains of the invisible musicians. They may, if they will, go out by day, but never in company; these daylight rambles being allowed them only when alone and under some assumed form. They therefore frequently fly about in the shape of party-colored little birds, or butterflies, or snow-white doves, showing kindness and benevolence to the good who merit their favor.

The Brown Dwarfs, the next in order, are less than eighteen inches high. They wear little brown coats and jackets, and a brown cap on their head, with a little silver bell in it. Some

of them wear black shoes, with red strings in them; in general, however, they wear fine glass ones; at their dances none of them wear any other. They are very handsome in their persons, with clear, light-colored eyes, and small and most beautiful hands and feet. They are, on the whole, of a cheerful, good-natured disposition, mingled with some roguish traits. Like the White Dwarfs, they are great artists in gold and silver, working so curiously as to astonish those who happen to see their performances. At night they come out of their hills and dance by the light of the moon and stars. They also glide invisibly into people's houses, their caps rendering them imperceptible by all who have not similar caps. They are said to play all kinds of tricks, to change the children in the cradles, and take them away. This charge is perhaps unfounded; but certainly children who fall into their hauds must serve them for fifty years. They possess an unlimited power of transformation, and can pass through the smallest key-holes. Frequently they bring with them presents for children, or lay gold rings and ducats, and the like, in their way, and often are invisibly present, and save them from the perils of fire and water. They plague and annoy lazy men-servants and untidy maids with frightful

dreams; oppress them as the nightmare; bite them as fleas; and scratch and tear them like cats and dogs; and often in the night frighten, in the shape of owls, thieves, and lovers, or, like will-o'-the-wisps, lead them astray into bogs and marshes, and perhaps up to those who are in pursuit of them.

The Black Dwarfs wear black jackets and caps, are not handsome like the others, but, on the contrary are horribly ugly, with weeping eyes, like blacksmiths and colliers. They are most expert workmen, especially in steel, to which they can give a degree at once of hardness and flexibility which no human smith can imitate; for the swords they make will bend like rushes, and are as hard as diamonds. In old times arms and armor made by them were in great request; shirts of mail manufactured by them were as fine as cobwebs, and yet no bullet would penetrate them, and no helm or corselet could resist the swords they fashioned; but all these things are now gone out of use.

These Dwarfs are of a malicious, ill disposition, and delight in doing mischief to mankind; they are unsocial, and there are seldom more than two or three of them seen together; they keep mostly in their hills, and seldom come out in the daytime, nor do they ever go far from home.

People say that in the summer they are fond of sitting under the elder-trees, the smell of which is very grateful to them, and that any one that wants anything of them must go there and call them. Some say they have no music and dancing, only howling and whimpering; and that when a screaming is heard in the woods and marshes, like that of crying children, and a mewling and screeching, like that of a multitude of cats or owls, the sounds proceed from their midnight assemblies, and are made by the vociferous Dwarfs.”*

The nisse is in the form of a child with the face of an old man. If maids and men can make him a friend in the farm-house, everything will prosper. The stromkarl is a great musician at whose music trees dance and water-falls stay their course. The merman dwells at the bottom of the sea, or near the shore in rocky cliffs. The mermaid is most beautiful in appearance, and has enticed many a fisherman and many a mariner to her lonely dwelling.

“The neck is the river-spirit. Sometimes he is represented as sitting during the summer nights on the surface of the water, like a pretty little boy with golden hair hanging in ringlets, and a red cap on his head; sometimes as above the water, like a handsome young man, but beneath

* Keightley, *Fairy Mythology*, pp. 174-176.

like a horse; at other times as an old man with a long beard, out of which he rings the water as he sits on the cliffs. The neck is very severe against any haughty maiden who makes an ill return to the love of her wooer; but should he himself fall in love with a maid of human kind, he is the most polite and attentive suitor in the world. The neck is also a great musician; he sits on the water, and plays on his gold harp, the harmony of which operates on all nature. To learn music of him, a person must present him with a black lamb, and also promise him resurrection and redemption." *

These little people are found under various names, throughout Germany, but are there more kindly and, we may almost say, more Christian. Otherwise they differ little from those in the north. The little wights are especially numerous in Southern Germany. They are about three quarters of an ell high, and are represented as old men with long beards. They haunt the mines, dressed as miners and provided with lanterns, mallets, and hammers. They do no injury while they are treated well, yet they sometimes find amusement in pelting the miners with small stones. They appear to be very busy in all kinds of work connected with the mines. They

* Anderson, Norse Mythology, pp. 203, 204.

show themselves especially where there is abundance of ore, and miners who are wise are always glad to see them and to make them their friends.

The conquerors of Great Britain brought their inheritance of religious ideas which lived long in their new home. We meet with frequent mention of little people of various names.

A pious curate was annoyed near Chippenham while coming home in the night. The writer of the account says: "Comming over the downes, it being near darke, and approaching one of the faiery dances, as the common people call them in these parts, viz., the greene circles made by those spirits on the grasse, he all at once saw an innumerable quantitie of pigmies, or very small people, dancing rounde and rounde, and singing and making all maner of small, odd noyses. He, being very greatly amazed, and yet not being able, as he says, to run away from them, being, as he supposes, kept there in a kinde of enchantment, they no sooner perceave him but they surround him on all sides, and what betwixte feare and amazement he fell down, scarcely knowing what he did; and thereupon these little creatures pinched him all over, and made a quick humming noyse all the tyme; but at length they left him, and when the sun rose he found himself exactly in the midst of one of

these fairy dances. This relation I had from him myselfe a few days after he was so tormented; but when I and my bed-fellow, Stump, wente soon afterwards, at night time, to the dances on the downes, we sawe none of the elves or faeries. But, indeed, it is saide, they seldom appeare to any persons who go to seeke for them." *

The fairies have found their way into English poetry, and receive just treatment, except where the poet is too much tied to classic mythology. It is concerning the Pixies that Brown writes in *Britannia's Pastorals*:

“Near to the wood there lay a pleasant mead,
Where fairies often did their measures tread,
Which in the meadows made such circles green,
As if with garlands it had crowned been;
Or like the circle where the signs we track,
And learned shepherds call’t the zodiac;
Within one of these rounds was to be seen
A hillock rise, where oft the fairy-queen
At twilight sate, and did command her elves
To pinch those maids that had not swept their shelves;
And, further, if, by maiden’s oversight,
Within doors water was not brought at night,
Or if they spread no table, set no bread,
They should have nips from toe unto the head;
And for the maid who had performed each thing,
She in the water-pail bade leave a ring.”

* Keightley, *Fairy Mythology*, pp. 292, 293.

Shakspeare makes a fairy ask Puck :

“ Are you not he
That frights the maidens of the villagery,
Skims milk, and sometimes labors in the quorn,
And bootless makes the breathless housewife churn ;
And sometimes makes the drink to bear no barm ;
Misleads night-wanderers, laughing at their harm ;
Those that hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,
You do their work, and they shall have good luck—
Are you not he ?”

These various airy creatures of popular belief are not all small people. Some are represented as quite human in size, and frequently form matrimonial alliances with the race of men. The permanency of these alliances depends upon some secret or obedience to some request which generally leads to a disastrous end. Children who are the fruit of such marriages sometimes also have an unfortunate career. Human beings entrapped by the fairy folk and carried to their abodes are well treated, and are not without opportunities of breaking the enchantment which holds them, and regaining their freedom. Most of these strange beings are invisible to mortal eyes, except when they choose to make themselves otherwise. They are industrious and helpful when well treated, and when they borrow they never fail to return. They hold their promises sacred, and always speak the truth. They pos-

sess immense wealth and many wonder-working charms. They give freely, and any trifle received from them is sure to possess great value. To secure any article belonging to a fairy places the little wight within the power of the one who keeps the treasure. They seem not to be immortal, but to live to a great age—perhaps thousands of years. They have great power over nature, and are endowed with great wisdom. A man may see them if he can get one of their caps and put it on his head, or if he puts a four-leaf clover in his own cap. When several persons stand near the fairy ring while the little people are dancing, if one place his foot at the edge of the ring, and the next place his foot on this one, and so on till all are thus joined foot to foot, the fairies become visible. The unwary who gets inside the ring is within their power and rendered invisible; and they compel him to dance till exhausted, or pinch his body till black and blue, or play him some other uncanny trick. A certain salve—which not only the fairies but certain “wise women” can make—placed upon the eyes makes the vision so clear that the little people can be seen quite easily. But he who possesses this power of sight must not recognize any inhabitant of the fairy world, for a breath from one of these strange beings will make him blind.

According to story, there are few fairies now in the countries where they were formerly so numerous. The sound of church-bells has compelled them to emigrate—and whither they have gone, none can tell.

IV

THE DOOM OF THE UNIVERSE.

THE scenes of Ragnarok, "the twilight of the gods," the destruction of the world and the regeneration of gods and men, are grand, awful, and gigantic beyond description. The giant Ymer gave birth to the gods, and they must die. The germ of death grows, and their strength wastes away. The conflict between the gods and the giants, which has been waged so long, must have an end. The warfare so evident in nature and in the soul of man must cease. Good, and not evil, must triumph at last. Nothing less than this will fully satisfy the Gothic faith.

The last days shall be days of evil times. Depravity shall become of a deeper dye; crime and terror shall stalk abroad over the earth, and war shall glut his ravenous appetite to the full. There shall be snow, frosts, piercing winds, tempests, and clouded suns through three Fimbul-winters, with no summer. During three other similar winters war and discord shall rage.

Brothers shall murder brothers, children their mothers, and fathers their sons.

“Brothers slay brothers;
Sisters’ children
Shed each other’s blood.
Hard is the world;
Sensual sin grows huge.
There are sword-ages, ax-ages;
Shields are cleft in twain;
Storm-ages, murder-ages,
Till the world falls dead,
And men no longer spare
Of pity one another.”

Things shall go on from bad to worse. The savage Fenris-wolf shall devour the sun, and Moongarm shall swallow up the moon. All the bright stars shall be hurled from heaven. The earth shall be so frightfully shaken that all trees shall be torn from their roots, all mountains fall headlong from their everlasting bases, and all bonds and fetters be snapped asunder.

And now the Midgard-serpent is loose, and has gained the land. Writhing in his course, he has caused the sea to rush over the earth. The Fenris-wolf is also loose. The ship Naglfar, or “Nailship,” constructed of the nails of dead men, floats on the waters. The giant Hrym is its steersman. The Fenris-wolf advances, with mouth opened so wide that while his lower jaw

is on the earth his upper jaw reaches heaven. Flames of fire flash from his eyes and nostrils. The Midgard-serpent is by his side, and vomits poisonous venom, which fills all the air and all the waters. The heavens are rent in twain, and on the path thus formed ride the dark sons of Muspel, in glittering array, Surt at their head, his sword outshining the sun, a flaming fire behind him and before. They resort to the battle-field called Vigrid; and Loke, with all the followers of Hel, is there, and Hrym, with all the frost-giants, is there.

But the gods too are awake. Heimdal blows his Blasthorn, and the sound fills all the universe. The gods assemble. Odin consults Mimer at the fountain. Ygdrasil, and all things on earth and in heaven, tremble. The gods and einherjes march forth, Odin, with golden helmet, resplendent cuirass, and terrible spear, at their head.

The world-battle is fought. Surt slays Frey. The dog Garm engages Tyr, and they slay one another. Thor kills the Midgard-serpent, but is himself suffocated by its venom. The Fenris-wolf swallows Odin; but Vidar comes to the rescue, though too late, and, placing his foot on the wolf's lower jaw, seizes the upper jaw with his hands and rends the monster in pieces. Heimdal and Loke slay each other. Surt fills

the world with fire, the flames of which reach to heaven. The earth is consumed, and sinks into the sea.

“Thus is Ragnarok! The great antagonism pervading the world is removed in a final struggle, in which the contending powers mutually destroy each other. Ragnarok is an outbreak of all the chaotic powers—a conflict between them and the established order of creation. Fire, water, darkness, and death work together to destroy the world. The gods and their enemies meet in a universal, world-embracing wrestle and duel, and mutually destroy each other. The flames of Surt, the supreme fire-god, complete the overthrow, and the last remnant of the consumed earth sinks into the ocean.”*

But this end is also the beginning. The vala looks again:

“She sees arise
The second time,
From the sea, the earth
Completely green;
Cascades do fall,
The eagle soars,
From lofty mounts
Pursues its prey.

The gods convene
On Ida's plains,

* Anderson, Norse Mythology, p. 427.

And talk of the powerful
Midgard-serpent;
They call to mind
The Fenris-wolf
And the ancient runes
Of the mighty Odin.

Then again
The wonderful
Golden tablets
Are found in the grass:
In time's morning
The leader of the gods
And Odin's race
Possessed them.

The fields unsown
Yield their growth;
All ills cease;
Balder comes.
Hoder and Balder,
Those heavenly gods,
Dwell together in Hropt's halls.
Conceive ye this, or not?"

While Surt's fire rages, a woman, Lif by name, and a man, hight Lifthraser, lie concealed in Hodmimer's forest, fed by the early dew. They shall give birth to a new race.

There is to be a general judgment at the end of all things.

"Then comes the mighty one
To the great judgment;

From heaven he comes,
He who guides all things—
Judgments he utters;
Strifes he appeases;
Laws he ordains
To flourish forever.”

The last utterance seems to look to the disappearance of all evil.

“There comes the dark
Dragon flying,
The shining serpent
From the Nida mountains
In the deep.
Over the plain it flies;
Dead bodies Nidhug
Drags in his whizzing plumage,—
Now must Nidhug sink.”*

Several of the gods reappear in the regenerate earth. Balder and Hoder, light and darkness, come back from Hel, and their sons inhabit the Windhome. The vans among whom Hoener was a hostage have perished, and the god returns, the developing force of the new world. Vidar, the imperishable force of crude nature; and Vale, the force of active nature, also imperishable,—are needed, and are at hand. Thor is gone; but his sons Mode and Magne, courage and strength, remain, and wield the hammer.

* Anderson, Norse Mythology, pp. 428, 429, 431, 432,

Lif and Lifthraser, the principles of life, become the parents of the new race. The good alone survive the awful conflict. The righteous rejoice in heavenly Gimle; the wicked, in Naastrand, wade in streams of venom, and it would seem, are finally washed down to Hvergelmer, "that horrible old kettle, where their bodies are torn by Nidhug, the dragon of the uttermost darkness."

The account of the creation is a sort of evolution, which may be a wreck of the primitive revelation sadly distorted by the wild fancy of these stern old warriors. The gods correspond with their wild scenery and wild life, and the retributions of the future satisfy their ideals of happiness and misery. They have filled the world with elves and fairies, which have furnished the material for the most charming household tales and the most beautiful pictures for the poet, while the giant forms in their mythology fill the mind with awe and amazement. Many modern customs, some of them most beautiful, may be traced to primitive recognitions of these various classes of beings.

The old Norse were given much to sorcery and divination. The diviners were male or female, but the latter were by far the most numerous. Some had familiar spirits, whom they

consulted in the form of little idols; others dragged the ghosts of the departed from their tombs, and compelled them to speak. Sometimes, as we shall see, the dead walked forth of their own accord, when they had not been treated well in this life, or when their last wishes had been disregarded.

Tacitus says that the Germans supposed that some divine and prophetic quality resided in women, and were careful neither to disregard their admonitions nor to neglect their answers.

“Nothing was formerly more common in the North than to meet with women who delivered oracular information, cured the most inveterate maladies, assumed whatever shape they pleased, raised storms, chained up the winds, traveled through the air, and, in one word, performed every function of the fairy art. Thus endowed with supernatural powers, these prophetesses being converted as it were into fairies or demons, influenced the events they had predicted, and all nature became subject to their command.”*

They resorted to supernatural means to discover the truth. They would tie the accused with cords, and cast him into the water. If he sank, he was considered innocent; if he floated,

* Mallet, *Northern Antiquities*, p. 200.

he was held to be guilty. They would compel him to handle hot iron, put on red-hot gauntlets, or walk blindfolded over burning plowshares. If, at the end of a certain number of days, marks of the fire remained on his hands, he was guilty; if not, he was innocent. They generally allowed champions to undergo the ordeal when women were the accused. The elements were thought to have been animated by an intelligent spirit, as just and righteous as the God whence it has sprung. This spirit would declare the truth by the treatment it extended to the accused.

There were famous oracles connected with the chief temples. Saxo the Grammarian tells us that it was the custom of the ancient Danes to consult the oracles of the Fates concerning the future destiny of children. Fridlief entered the temple of the gods to pray, and to learn the destiny of his son Olaus. In the sanctuary he saw three goddesses seated. The first goddess was most kindly disposed, and granted the child both beauty and the gift of pleasing. The second endowed him with a noble heart. But the third was an evil goddess, moved by envy and spite, and determined to destroy the work of her sisters. To this end she cursed him with covetousness.

It was sometimes thought that the statues spoke, and the people succeeded in persuading themselves that they could see a gesture or nod of the head.

The runes were used for purposes of divination. The bitter runes could injure an enemy; the victorious runes would secure success in battle; the medicinal runes, inscribed on leaves, would heal all wounds and all diseases. Some would dispel melancholy, prevent shipwreck, and preserve against the resentment of enemies; others were antidotes against poison, or would render a mistress favorable. These various kinds of runes differed only in the ceremonies observed in writing them, in the materials employed, in the places where they were exposed, in the manner in which the lines were drawn, and in other similar particulars.

Once upon a time Egil and Thorfinn sat together at table. Egil noticed a woman who lay sick upon a cross-bench, and learned that she was Thorfinn's daughter Helga. She had been long ill from a wasting sickness. She could get no sleep at night, and was like one *ham-stolen*, or crazy. He inquired whether she had received any treatment, and learned that a son of a bondi of the neighborhood had traced runes for her recovery, but that she was far worse after than

before the operation. At the solicitation of Thorfinn, Egil took her case in charge. He ordered her to be taken out of the bed and clean clothes to be placed under her. Upon examining the bed he found in it a piece of whalebone, with runes cut thereon. He read them, cut them off, and scraped the chips into the fire. He then burned the whalebone, and had the woman's clothes carried out into the open air. Then he sang:

“As man shall not trace runes
Except he can read them well,
It is thus with many a man
That the dark letters bewilder him.
I saw on the cut whalebone
Ten hidden letters carved,
That have caused to the leek-linden (woman)
A very long sorrow.”

Egil himself now traced new runes, and placed them under the pillow in the bed where the sick woman lay. The effect was magical. She said that it seemed as though she had just awoke from a sleep; and she was healed, though for some time she continued weak. The father and the mother rejoiced greatly at her recovery.*

When Thwied was taken down to the sea,

* Du Chaillu, *The Viking Age*, Vol. I, pp. 164, 165; Egil's Saga, c. 75.

she found a stump of a tree with the roots. It was as large as a man could well carry. Upon carefully examining, she found evidences that one side had been burned and rubbed. On this side she smoothed a small spot with a knife, and carved runes thereon. Then she reddened it with her blood, chanting over it an incantation. Many other powerful incantations did she pronounce, while she walked backward in a direction opposite to the course of the sun around the stump. Then she had it pushed out to sea, that it might be driven to Drangey and be a source of mischief to Grettir. Her object was accomplished; for, behold, it came to pass that while Grettir was cutting the stump to procure wood for the fire, he wounded himself severely above the knee with his ax! And thus, most surely, the curse holds sternly on its way and does its work.*

Snorro and Thorolf Baegifot were engaged in various quarrels for a long time. At last Thorolf was found dead at table, sitting in his chair, and was buried in a strong grave, with such ceremonies as the occasion demanded. But the grave could not hold its victim. "He appeared in the district by day and by night, slew men

* Du Chaillu, *The Viking Age*, Vol. I, pp. 166, 167; cf. Gretti's Saga, c. 81.

and cattle, and harrowed the country so much by his frequent apparition and mischievous exploits, that his son Arnkill, on the repeated complaints of the inhabitants, resolved to change the place of his sepulture. Some opposition was threatened by the sons of Thorbrand, who refused to permit the corpse to be carried through their domains, until reminded by their father that it was illegal to refuse passage to those who were traveling in discharge of a duty imposed by law, and such was the burial of the dead. The body of Thorolf was found on opening the tomb, but his aspect was fearful and grisly to a preternatural degree. He was placed on a bier, between two strong oxen, which, nevertheless, were worn out by fatigue ere they had transported him many miles. Others were substituted in their room; but when they attained the summit of a hill, at some distance from the destined place of sepulture, they became frantic, and, breaking their yokes, rushed down the precipice and perished. The corpse, too, became of such ponderous weight that it could by no means be transported any farther, so that Arnkill was fain to consign it to the earth on the ridge of the hill where it lay, and which took its name thenceforth from that of Baegifot. Arnkill caused a mound of immense height to be piled above the

grave, and Thorolf, during the life-time of his son, remained quiet in his new abode." But after the death of Arnkill, he again came forth from the tomb, slaying cattle and people, and driving the inhabitants from their homes. It was therefore resolved to burn the body. With great difficulty it was transported to the sea-shore, where it was burned. The district now, after so long a period of disturbance, had rest.*

The temple was a great banqueting-hall, with a small sanctuary at one end. A hearth in the center of the hall contained the fire. Apertures in the roof, which seem to have been furnished with shutters, afforded both windows and openings for the escape of smoke. Between two wooden columns on the southern side of the hall was a high seat, occupied by the chieftain. These columns were carved with runic characters and ornamented with images of the divinities. When a chief would form a settlement on a distant coast, he would frequently take with him these sacred columns, and, as he neared the shore, throw them overboard. They would float to the shore, and, at the place where they landed, he would form his settlement and erect a new temple. On the north side of the hall was a seat for the most distinguished guest. On right and left of

* Mallet, *Northern Antiquities*, pp. 530, 531.

the chief and the honored guest were the retainers of the court and the other guests of lesser dignity and worth. The flesh of the sacrificial animal was boiled in a huge kettle over the fire and served to the company, who amused themselves by throwing the bones, stripped of their flesh, at one another across the hall. They vied with one another drinking ale, and skalds were always present to charm or inspire them with their poetic lays.

The sacrifices offered to the gods seem at first to have been the simple productions of the earth. At a later period animal sacrifices, and even human victims, were thought to be most acceptable.

At the beginning of the battle of Hakon, the Norwegian Jarl, against the sea-rovers of Jomsburg, victory seemed to be turning to the side of his enemies. The Jarl called his sons ashore for a consultation. "Hakon Jarl said: 'I think I see that the battle begins to turn against us; and I dislike to fight against these men, for I believe that none are their equals; and I see that it will fare ill, unless we hit upon some plan; you must stay here with the host, for it is imprudent for all the chiefs to leave it, if the Jorrvikings attack, as we may at any moment expect. I will go ashore with some men, and

see what can be done.' The Jarl went ashore north to the island. He entered a glade in the forest, sank down on both his knees, and prayed; he looked northwards, and spoke what he thought was most to the purpose; and in his prayers he called upon his fully trusted Thorgerd Hórdatróff; but she turned a deaf ear to his prayer, and he thought that she must have become angry with him. He offered to sacrifice several things, but she would not accept them, and it seemed to him the case was hopeless. At last he offered human sacrifices, but she would not accept them. The Jarl considered his case most hopeless, if he could not please her; he began to increase the offer, and at last included all his men except himself and his sons Eirik and Svein. He had a son, Erling, who was seven winters old, and a very promising youth. Thorgerd accepted his offer, and chose Erling, his son. When the Jarl found that his prayers and vows were heard, he thought the matters were better, and thereupon gave the boy to Skopti Kurk, his thrall, who put him to death in Hakon's usual way as taught by him."*

Men, particularly those slain in battle, were given to Odin for victory; and the altars were

* Du Chaillu, *The Viking Age*, Vol. I, p. 367. Quoted from *Fornmanna Sögur*, xi, 134.

stained with the blood of fallen chiefs. Prisoners of war were sacrificed, their blood placed in bowls, and their bodies thrown into the bogs or a sacrificing spring at the door of the temple.

“Thorgrim Godi was a great sacrificer. He had a large temple raised in his grass-plot, one hundred feet in length and sixty in breadth, and every man was to pay temple-tax to it. Thor was most worshiped there; the inmost part of it was made round, as if it were a dome; it was all covered with hangings, and had windows; Thor stood in the middle, and other gods on both sides. There was an altar in front, made with great skill, and covered above with iron; on it there was to be a fire, which should never die out, which they called holy fire. On the altar was to lie a large ring of silver, which the temple priest was to wear on his arm at all meetings. Upon it all oaths were to be taken in cases of circumstantial evidence. On the altar was to stand a large bowl of copper, in which was to be put the blood which came from the cattle or men given to Thor; these they called *hlaut* (sacrifice-blood), and *hlaut-bolli* (sacrifice-bowl). The *hlaut* was to be sprinkled on men and cattle, and the cattle were to be used for the people (to eat) when the sacrificing feasts were

held. The men whom they sacrificed were to be thrown down into the spring which was outside, near the doors, which they called *blót-kelda*.”*

The *doim-ring* was a ring of stones, in the center of which was a sacrificial stone, on which human victims were broken.

There was a still more fearful mode of sacrificing. On the back, on both sides of the spine, a space was marked out in the form of an eagle. From this space the skin and flesh were torn even to the bone, and the lungs were dragged from the openings which had been made.

The temple of Upsal, in Sweden, glittered on all sides with gold. It was consecrated to the three great divinities, which were represented by images. Odin had a sword in his hand. Thor, at his left, had a scepter in one hand, and his hammer in the other. He wore a crown on his head. Sometimes he was represented on a chariot, drawn by two he-goats with silver bridles, and his head surrounded with stars. Frey stood at the left of Thor, and was in form a hermaphrodite. Near the temple was the sacred grove of Odin, full of the bones of men and animals which had been sacrificed. Every tree and every leaf in this grove was held most sacred.

* Du Chaillu, *The Viking Age*, Vol. I, pp. 368, 369. Quoted from Kjalnesinga, c. 2.

Sacrifices were renewed every ninth month for nine days, and nine victims, either animal or human, were offered. Every ninth year the most solemn sacrifices were performed. On this occasion the king and all important citizens were obliged to appear with offerings. Those who could not come in person sent their presents or their value in money. Many strangers thronged the city, and none with unstained honor were excluded; but no man accused of cowardice dared appear at this sacred assembly of heroes. They chose nine persons to be sacrificed. These were selected from captives in time of war, and from slaves in time of peace. The method of selection was the lot, and yet the opinions of the bystanders had much to do with determining the choice. When the occasion was one of the greatest importance noble victims were required. The first king of Vermaland was burned as a sacrifice to Odin, to put an end to a dearth. Aun, king of Sweden, devoted to Odin nine sons that his own life might be prolonged.

We have several accounts of the rites to be observed in offering sacrifices. The sacred fire upon the altar was kept burning day and night. It was surrounded by all sorts of iron and brazen vessels. Among them was one conspicuous for its size, which was destined for the reception of

the blood of the victims. The victim having been chosen, it was conducted to the altar, at the foot of which it was speedily killed. The entrails were examined, and auguries drawn therefrom the same as among the classic nations. The flesh was dressed and served up to crown the feast prepared for the assembly. The people were not fastidious in their tastes, but partook of even horse with pleasure—the chiefs as well as the people not rejecting this uncommon article of diet. When human sacrifices were offered, the victim which had been selected was laid upon a flat stone, and in this position either strangled or knocked on the head. The bodies were sometimes burned and sometimes suspended in a sacred grove not far from the temple. The blood which had been caught was used to sanctify the place and the people. A portion was sprinkled upon the people and a portion upon the sacred grove. The images of the gods and their altars were also sprinkled upon by the blood of the sacrifice. The benches within the temple were bedewed, and the walls of the temple, both within and without, were sprinkled.*

We have ceased to be startled when we meet with human sacrifices, either in the religions of ancient peoples or among savage tribes of mod-

* Mallet, *Northern Antiquities*, p. 113.

ern times. The subject of human sacrifices, though an interesting one, is too large for treatment here; but we hope to return to its discussion in a future work.

When Fridthjof entered the great temple in Moeri, the kings at the *disablót* sat drinking. "There was fire on the floor, and their wives sat at the fireside and warmed the gods, and some besmeared them with grease and wiped them with a cloth."* Though idols were not known in the early religion, they had already become greatly multiplied when Christianity came into contact with this form of heathendom.

Sigmond was ready to start on an expedition to avenge his father, and Hakon Jarl went out with him, and asked concerning his religious belief. "Sigmond answered: 'I believe in my might and strength.' The Jarl replied: 'It must not be so. Thou must seek for help where I put all my trust, which is in Thorgerd Hörðabrud. Let us go to her, and try to get luck for thee from her.' Sigmond told him to do as he liked. They went to the woods, and then, by a little by-path, to an open space in the forest, where there was a house with a fence around it. This house was very fine, and the carvings were ornamented with gold and silver. Hakon and

* Fridthjof's Saga, 9.

Sigmond entered with a few men. There were many gods, and so many glass windows that there was no shadow anywhere. A splendidly dressed woman was in the inner part of the house, opposite the entrance. The Jarl threw himself down, and lay long before her feet; then he arose and told Sigmond that they must make her some sacrifice, and put silver on the stool before her. 'But, as a mark that she will accept, I want her to let loose the ring she wears on her arm; then Sigmond will get luck from that ring.' The Jarl took hold of the ring, but it seemed to Sigmond that she clenched her fist, and he did not get it. He threw himself down a second time before her, and Sigmond saw that he wept. He rose, and took hold of the ring, which then was loose, and gave it to Sigmond, who promised not to part with the ring."

The great temple in Gautland accommodated one hundred gods.

When Olaf Tryggvason, with a few attendants, entered the temple of Thrandheim, he beheld a multitude of carved idols. Thor was the favorite god and most worshiped, and had a place in the middle of the group. He was of large size, and was ornamented all over with gold and silver. Two well-made he-goats were harnessed to the chariot in which he sat. The

goats, as well as the chariot, rested on wheels. Around the horns of the goats was a rope of twisted silver. The whole was a work of wonderful skill.*

Dithmar was bishop of Merseburg in the eleventh century. He tells us that there was in his day, in Zealand, a place which was the capital of Denmark, named Lederun. To this place the Danes resort in multitudes every nine years, in the month of January, to offer sacrifices. Upon this most sacred occasion ninety-nine men, and the same number each of horses, dogs, and cocks, were sacrificed to appease the gods.

Arngrim Jonas, an Icelandic author of great learning, says that there were two temples in Iceland in which human sacrifices were offered, and a famous pit or well into which they were thrown headlong.

In each of these temples of Iceland "there was a private chapel, which was regarded as a holy place. There they placed the idols upon a kind of altar, around which they ranged the victims that were to be offered up. Another altar stood opposite to it, plated with iron, in order that the fire, which was to burn there perpetually, should not damage it. Upon this altar

* Du Chaillu, *The Viking Age*, Vol. I, pp. 376, 377: *Faerey-unga Saga*, ch. 23; *Flateyjarbók*, i, p. 319.

was placed a vase of brass, in which they received the blood of the victims. Beside it stood a brush, which they made use of to sprinkle the blood upon the bystanders. There hung up likewise a great silver ring, which they stained with blood, and which whoever took an oath on any occasion was required to hold in his hand. In one of these temples there was also, near the chapel, a deep pit or well, into which they cast the victims.”*

The Thingstead of Iceland “was always near the temple, in which one of the sacerdotal magistrates performed a sacrifice and sprinkled the walls of the edifice, as well as the bystanders, with the blood of the victims—holding in his hand, on this as on every other solemn occasion, a massive silver ring, with which the altar of every temple was furnished. The Things were held in the open air, and served both for the discussion of public affairs and the administration of justice. For the latter purpose, a circle called the doom-ring, *dómhringr*, was formed with hazel-twigs, to which were attached cords called *vebönd*. Within this circle sat the judges, the people standing on the outside, and in the middle stood the blótsteinn, a huge stone with a sharp ridge, on

* Mallet, Northern Antiquities, p 109.

which the backs of criminals condemned to death were broken." *

There were three great religious festivals. The first was celebrated at the winter solstice. The night on which it was observed was called Mother-night, because it marked the beginning of the year. The feast was called Jul, and was held in honor of Frey, from whom they supplicated a fruitful and propitious season. There were sacrifices, feasting, nocturnal assemblies, and demonstrations of most dissolute joy.

The second festival was held at the first quarter of the second moon of the year, and was sacred to certain female divinities. It was to secure pleasure, fruitfulness, and victory over all enemies.

The third festival was celebrated in honor of Odin at the beginning of the year, to welcome the beautiful season, and to insure success in all warlike expeditions.

This old religion, though it has long ago passed away, has left a fragrance in the homes and hearts of all descendants of the hardy and earnest Norse in whatever part of the world destiny has fixed their habitations, and wherever to-day they bow the knee in the presence of brighter and holier gods.

* Mallet, *Northern Antiquities*, p. 291.

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